The New Coterie

A QUARTERLY
OF LITERATURE
& ART

NUMBER FIVE
(SPRING - - - 1927)

LONDON :
E. ARCHER, 68, Red Lion Street, Holborn, W.C.1.

THE SONG OF SONGS *By RHYS DAVIES*

—being six stories of life in a Welsh mining village. Three have appeared in **"The New Coterie,"** where they have attracted the attention of the critics.

"fresh and talented."—"marked by deep and controlled feeling."—The Times Literary Supplement.

With a drawing of the author by Wm. Roberts.

Ordinary edition (900 numbered copies)... ... ... **3/6** net.
Special edition (100 numbered copies signed by author and artist) ... ... **10/6** net.

NEW STORIES OF WELSH LIFE.

"Though the stories of Welsh life contained in this book are distinctly of the Caradoc Evans variety, showing to some extent the influence of that writer, they are yet the expression of a very different personality. Mr. Caradoc Evans might easily have written some of the uglier tales had he been born in one of the industrial valleys of South Wales instead of in rural Cardiganshire, but, lacking Mr. Davies's detachment, sense of humour, and broader sympathy, he (as we know him) could never have woven the story we have here of the woman who sickened for 'a big organ with a mirror in the middle and a little row of pipes each side, like the one I did see in a shop in Pontypridd last summer,' or the yarn purporting to give the history of the consumption of tripe in South Wales.

"Mr. Davies, though merciless, is just. Those who have lived in the peopled 'valleys' and have known the life intimately will have to admit that his pictures and suggestions of jealousy, avarice, and vanity are, unfortunately, founded on fact to a certain extent." — *The Western Mail*, Cardiff.

WELSH VILLAGE SKETCHES.

"All these stories are of Welsh life, written by a Welshman. Some of them are brilliant. As a realist, Mr. Rhys Davies has undoubtedly made a mark. But realism can be a dangerous master, if a good servant. Mr. Davies will have to be careful that his vivid, vital pen does not destroy his own art.

"Some of Mr. Davies's stories, 'History' and 'The Sisters' are almost on a par with Tchekov, while the dialect throughout is extremely well done. A few, however, fall far below the standard which the author has set himself. With this reflection is coupled the thought that it is a pity that such a fine craftsman should sometimes dabble with mud when his true material is marble, the latter incidentally being the colour of a charming cover which the author has chosen for his 'Song of Songs.'"—*South Wales News*.

From all Bookshops, or the Publisher : **E. ARCHER, 68, Red Lion Street, London, W.C.1.**

A limited number of copies of the first four numbers of

"The New Coterie"

have been reserved for subscribers to the second volume.

Price **10/8** *post free.*

Slip-cases (to hold 4 numbers) **3/6** *post free.*

E. ARCHER,
68, Red Lion St., London, W.C.1

Blocks by
RUMPH & WAITE LTD.
Specialists in Reproductions of Old Engravings in Line and Half-tone and 3 & 4 Colour Processes.
ELECTROTYPERS
ARTISTS
PHOTOGRAPHERS
CITY 7065
MAY WE QUOTE YOU?

The New Coterie.

NUMBER FIVE - SPRING, 1927.

COVER DESIGN BY WILLIAM ROBERTS.

		PAGE
I.	*Editorial*	5
II.	H. E. Bates : *The Spring Song*	8
III.	E. Betts : *Poet's Dell*	15
IV.	Wilfred Childe : *Three Poems*	19
V.	Rupert Croft Cooke : *The Queen Bee : A Sequence*	21
VI.	Philip Henderson : *In the Night*	24
VII.	Frantisek Langer : *The Rat-catcher and the Harlots*	37
VIII.	Liam O'Flaherty : *The Child of God*	43
IX.	T. F. Powys : *What Lack I Yet?*	61
X.	Paul Selver : *Two Poems*	70
XI.	A. S. J. Tessimond : *Three Poems*	72
XII.	Helen Todd : *Waiting*	74
XIII.	Geoffrey West : *The Marvel*	78
XIV.	Joan Woollcombe : *Analysis*	83
XV.	*Wisdom of the Quarter*	91

ART.

William Roberts : *Drawing of H. E. Bates*	Frontispiece	
Eric Kennington : *Bust of Col. T. E. Lawrence* ..	facing page	32
Cecil Salkeld : *The Builders*	,, ,,	48
Stanley Spencer : *Camouflaged Grenadier*	,, ,,	64
Bissill : *Design for a Bookplate*	page	82

Recent Books by Contributors to "The New Coterie."

H. E. Bates	"The Two Sisters." A Novel with an introduction by Edward Garnett. Cape, 1926	7/6
Wilfred Childe.	"Ivory Palaces." Poems. Kegal Paul. 1925 ..	6/–
,, ,,	"The Ballad of Jak and Ann." Swan Press, Leeds ..	6d.
Rupert Croft-Cooke.	"Songs South of the Line." 1925	3/–
Liam O'Flaherty.	"Thy Neighbour's Wife." A Novel. Cape	7/6
,, ,,	"The Black Soul." A Novel. Cape	7/6
,, ,,	"Spring Sowing." Stories. Cape	7/6
,, ,,	"The Informer." A Novel. Cape	7/6
,, ,,	"The Tent" and other stories. Cape	7/6
,, ,,	"Mr. Gilhooley." Cape. 1926	7/6
T. F. Powys.	"The Left Leg." Chatto & Windus	7/6
,, ,,	"Black Bryony." Chatto & Windus	6/–
,, ,,	"Mark Only." Chatto & Windus	7/–
,, ,,	"Mr. Tasker's Gods." Chatto & Windus	7/6
,, ,,	"Mockery Gap." Chatto & Windus	7/–
,, ,,	"Innocent Birds." Chatto & Windus	7/6
,, ,,	"Mr. Weston's Good Wine." To be published in a limited edition of 500 copies only by Chatto & Windus .. .. Price not fixed yet.	
Paul Selver.	"Personalities." Poems. Allen & Unwin	2/6
,, ,,	"Schooling." A Novel. Jarrolds	7/6
,, ,,	"One, Two, Three." A Novel. Jarrolds. 1926 ..	7/6

All the above books are obtainable at all First-Class Bookshops, or can be ordered from

E. Archer's Bookshop,

68, RED LION STREET - - - LONDON, W.C.1.

The New Coterie

A Quarterly of Literature & Art

2/6

All Communications should be addressed to:

The Editor,
THE NEW COTERIE,
68, Red Lion Street,
Holborn, W.C.1

Contributions submitted should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope

EDITORIAL.

WE are rather surprised that nobody has hitherto thought it worth while to examine the treatment of literature in the three latest supplementary volumes of " The Encyclopædia Britannica." The main article on recent English writers, which is signed " J. C. Sq.," after giving a fair survey of the prose work produced in the last decade or so, concludes thus : " May Sinclair, J. D. Beresford, E. F. Benson, Leo Myers, R. H. Mottram, Aldous Huxley, P. G. Wodehouse, Frank Swinnerton and many other names might be added to the list of the novelists who, during the period, produced novels competent or more than competent." You do not believe this ? Turn to Vol. I, p. 1008 of the publication to which we have referred, and there you will find it.

* * *

Now we will suppress every temptation to be offensive or even merely ironical, and ask quite courteously what use the above passage is likely to be to anyone in search of information about contemporary English fiction. Remember that this is not a casual newspaper article. It is taken from what the advertisements describe as " the *only* work of reference that gives you *all* the knowledge in the world worth having. No other book ever written has approached it in authority and completeness." And again the loud, big voice from 125, High Holborn, reminds us that " here, in 33,000 pages, are 45,000 articles—over a million facts—written by more than 2,500 of the great world leaders in every branch of activity." Very well, then. We think that we are entitled to complain of the manner in which " J. C. Sq.," that great world leader, has dealt with the contemporary English novel. Nor does he contribute very substantially towards that grand total of over a million facts, when he discusses recent English poetry. Here, too, he concludes with a string of names, this time referring to those who, as he puts it, " beautifully registered moments and moods." Among them are a few tolerable poets and several intolerable versifiers. But you will search in vain for Roy Campbell or F. V. Branford, without whom no account of the subject can reasonably be considered to possess " authority " or " completeness."

* * *

We have said enough to indicate the nature and quality of " J. C. Sq." 's literary criticism. He, however, is not the only great world leader who interprets English literature to the purchasers of the " greatest bargain ever offered ! " as the advertisements delicately put it. No, there are others who approach the mighty theme from a somewhat different angle. Thus, the main article is amplified (and occasionally contradicted) by a series of smaller articles, arranged in their alphabetical sequence, and devoted (at times, very devoted) to individual writers. Among the British

authors included is Lord Beaverbrook, who receives a whole column to himself, *i.e.*, more than twice as much space as W. B. Yeats or W. H. Hudson, three times as much as Walter de la Mare, four times as much as E. M. Forster and five times as much as Katherine Mansfield. A large slice of this column is concerned with that portion of His Lordship's literary career which involved the amalgamation of three Canadian cement mills. And if you think that too much attention has been given to His Lordship, you will change your mind when I tell you that another distinguished author, the late Lord Northcliffe, to wit, gets four whole columns to himself. Perhaps you will also realise now why the new 13th edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" is being offered for sale by methods which combine the bland bonhomie of Mr. Drage with the hearty assertiveness of Mr. Kruschen.

* * *

Let us return to Lord Beaverbrook, before we forget him. A few weeks ago His Lordship started embellishing the already very beautiful *Sunday Express* with a series of articles, to which, probably prompted by his own little book, "Success," he prefixed the general title of "Splendid Failures." The second of these lordly meditations was woven around the person of Mr. William Gerhardi. Now Mr. Gerhardi is a young author (a month or two over thirty, we believe), who has written two novels, a volume of criticism and a number of short stories. His work has been overpraised by the injudicious, but there can be little doubt that he is one of those comparatively few writers who know how to write. Yet Lord Beaverbrook considers him a splendid failure. Why? Here is part of His Lordship's answer: "It is a year since he accepted an offer for a serial for the *Daily Express*—always keen to seek out talent and explore rising genius. I have never seen a line of this promised work . . . ." This is followed by quantities of drivel describing how Mr. Gerhardi asked His Lordship for champagne, how His Lordship introduced Mr. Gerhardi to Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Wells, how Mr. Gerhardi argued with Lord Birkenhead—but these things do not concern us here. May we, however, suggest with all due respect that Lord Beaverbrook's article is a piece of arrant impertinence? For what had His Lordship achieved when he was Mr. Gerhardi's age? What, for the matter of that, has he ever achieved? We have consulted "Who's Who" without piercing the mystery, and "The Encyclopædia Britannica" really tells of little beyond the amalgamation of three Canadian cement mills, to which we have already alluded. The only habitual occupation with which His Lordship can be at all identified is miscellaneous tripe-dressing, and the best thing he can do is to keep to it.

* * *

We observe, by the way, with some astonishment that in *The Evening Standard* for February 3rd, Mr. Arnold Bennett echoes Lord Beaverbrook's

peevish bleat about Mr. Gerhardi. He says: "Consider the case of William Gerhardi. He wrote one excellent novel, 'Futility,' and a second novel which glints here and there with genius, 'The Polyglots.' No sign of a third novel . . . ." Well, what of it? Does Mr. Bennett suppose that novels (we mean, of course, novels which can definitely be identified as works of art) are turned out like so many Ford cars? Evidently he does not, because elsewhere in the same article he rightly observes: "Creative ideas are not to be fetched." If he knows that, how on earth is it possible for him to repeat Lord Beaverbrook's fatuous ideas on this of all subjects?

* * *

In previous editorials we have had reason to complain of press notices which, to all appearances, were the work of hooligans or imbeciles. Hitherto, the only writer from whom we received any intelligent recognition was M. Henry Davray, of the "Mercure de France." He is now joined by A.N., who, in "The New Age" for December 9th last scrutinises our fourth number in some detail. We will not scrutinise his scrutiny in equal detail, but we must at least record his summing up: "THE NEW COTERIE . . . is thoroughly representative of the Art for Art's sake group of modern writers, and the student of modern movements in literature cannot, in my opinion, follow his study thoroughly without seeing it." Let us add that we do not agree with all A.N.'s conclusions. But he is a shrewd critic with a sense of style, and as such he receives our cordial welcome.

* * *

Since the last issue of THE NEW COTERIE appeared, European literature has lost a distinguished representative in R. M. Rilke, who died towards the end of 1926. He was born in Prague a little over fifty years ago, and as a young man he lived for some time in Russia. Perhaps that is why the musical effects the German language yielded to him are such as nobody else has achieved. His "Stundenbuch" and "Buch der Bilder" in particular, contain poems of a subtle melody which it would be hard to match in any literature. After the war Rilke proceeded, or rather returned, to Paris, where he established a reputation scarcely inferior to the one he already possessed in Germany. When the French critics read the translation of his semi-autobiographical prose-work "Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge" (which originally appeared in 1910) they discovered in their surprise that he had anticipated the literary method of Marcel Proust. And he surprised them at least as much by publishing, under the title of "Vergers," a volume of poems in French, which are considerably more than a linguistic exercise. The second instalment of our "European Anthology" included a poem by him, but it belongs to his earlier period, and we cannot pretend that it gives any adequate idea of his lyric qualities at their prime. Only a miracle could reproduce them in a translation.

THE SPRING SONG.

ALL day the June sky had stretched out in perfect serenity, like an immense blue pond without a ripple or shadow. Beneath it the earth seemed to tremble like a thirsty animal chained just beyond reach of water, while between the trees sat in a sort of solemn, imposing lethargy, like judges presiding over some interminable suit between earth and heaven. I took off my coat as I descended the hill. The sweat ran down my nose in a warm trickle. Thick, snowy dust rose up and clouded the brightness of my shoes just as a faint ominous haze had begun to cloud the horizon beyond the reposeful roofs of the town below. One or two people eyed me curiously as they shot past in their traps to market. Sometimes when they had gone I grinned after them with the faintly cynical assurance of a young man having made an impression, and was happy.

As I came to the streets of the town, however, I struggled into my coat again. I had the sensitive pride of a young man, too, and already, besides, the dark haze on the horizon seemed to have shot forward as if under some mysterious urge from beyond the edge of the earth. I didn't like the look of it, and I began to do my trivial pieces of shopping with an alacrity which brought the sweat running down my nose faster than ever.

Finally, at a book-seller's in the market-place, where I used to go and scent out a bargain or two each visit, I paused abruptly in the act of turning over a page. The proprietor put his face outside the door as if suspicious of something not quite right in the sky. Instinctively I followed his glance. I uttered a cry of stupid amazement which he silenced abruptly with the laconic pronouncement: "Thunder." We nodded sagaciously at each other like men resolving to share a secret. The next moment he left the shop and began to gather in his trays of books with the air of a conscientious shepherd.

I, too, hastened outside. The grey awnings of the market-stalls were already flapping ominously in the breeze that had

sprung up. The sky was three-quarters dark under an oppressive advance of iron-coloured cloud. Beneath the awnings little pools of fruit and confectionery, flowers and cloth began to gleam in that sinister light as if afire.

From the door-way of the book-shop, to which I had hastily retreated again, I watched the market soak rapidly under an incredibly fierce onslaught of thunderous rain. The grey polish of the cobbles gave up the gloom of the sky again. One or two people flitted like dark spirits across the square, hunching their shoulders; little crowds of others clung to the door-ways in dark bunches. Now and then an umbrella would spring up like a mushroom in that brief, gloomy night and then vanish abruptly. Colour and movement began to vanish, too, until nothing seemed to exist but grey and a deep thunderous brown, and there was no movement but that of the rain. A clock above me boomed half-past three, like a thing mourning its isolation—then the square was silent.

It was as if all this had happened in preparation for an event —as for the entrance of a principal in a play. I became conscious of colour and movement entering the scene as if by magic. Across the deserted square there advanced slowly a white horse drawing a green trap.

I watched its approach with idle interest. As it came nearer I saw that the animal's body was already drenched with rain and was steaming and in places yellow. The reins sagged listlessly up to the head, which drooped a fraction, the tail lay plastered wetly against the quarters, and in spite of its colour it looked no less oppressive than the rest of the square into which it had suddenly come. A yard or two away from me it shuddered stormily and became still. At the sight of that drenched wreck, my interest suddenly became of the most apathetic kind.

Then, from that fit of silent gloom I remember being wrenched with an abruptness against which I wanted to protest with a cry. And in the sudden emotion of surprise at finding myself confronted with that girl in the trap itself, staring out with solemnity from the great umbrella arching over her, I believe I could have done so without a qualm. As it was I only watched her. In her stillness she was like a little pale image in some dark sanctuary. Only her eyes once or twice travelled quickly over the rainy road, the sky and the clusters of people

about the shops and then returned to a dreamy contemplation of the horse's head. I began a contemplation also—only half-conscious of what I did—against the intensity of which her face remained as immobile as if modelled in alabaster.

Gradually I began to wonder all sorts of things about her—her christian name, why she was alone, how old she was, and as to her secret of the naive fascination in her still form. Every moment a new army of impressions besieged me. I remember wanting to say something arresting and fine in order to make her look at me. Yet I believe the slightest suggestion of a glance would have aroused me to a point of demonstrative exultation. The foolish part of it was that I couldn't explain even my slightest emotion ; my brain seemed capable of nothing but one silent, ridiculous demand : " Why doesn't she look at me ? Why doesn't she look at me ? "

I must have cut the most ludicrous figure. Had she by any chance become aware of me she must have burst into uncontrollable laughter. Now I am glad she never once looked at me. I don't believe I could have endured the disturbance of that serene beauty in silence.

Four o'clock struck. I seemed to wake with a shudder and see people crossing the road with upturned faces and palms. I knew the rain must be stopping—but my mind still went on, like the thunder now afar off :

" Why doesn't she look at me ? Why doesn't she look at me ? "

Above me I saw a yellow slit appear in the sky. I watched it break into great blue wounds among the clouds. Around me the shelterers were beginning to pass off and the thought of being alone on the edge of that shining pavement made me tremble as if I had been on the brink of a precipice. Suddenly the girl in the trap shut up her umbrella and shook her slightly wet hair and smiled at the sky. The sight made me pace up and down before the trap in an ecstasy of despair.

By doing so I caught sight of the name in white letters on the side and I began to repeat its monosyllable like a child at a task : " Dean, Dean, Dean." I broke into a sweat again. It seemed as if my fingers were burning scars in the covers of my books. As if expecting them both to vanish from me I continued to

watch the girl and repeat that name with the pitiful desperation that only youth can summon.

Then suddenly, to end it all, a woman came up and called " Thomasin " twice to the dreamy girl, then got into the trap and drove away. It was done in a moment. There seemed to be a flash of green and white, like the brief unfurling of a banner, then an emptiness in which I remember standing like a dull regretful fool, with a single thought, " It's all over. It's all over."

* * *

A glamorous week and a day went past. Staring up at the sky I lay dreaming away the hot Sunday afternoon in the shadow of a wood outside the village. Everywhere was silent. Only now and then the vast green temple behind me would give up the solitary song of some bird shy of the sunlight, or of another breaking out like an escaping prisoner into the bright air above. The may still splashed the hedges, as if with milk. Deceptively close and loud the cuckoos talked monotonously, only deepening the silence of a world that seemed to be sleeping under the benign dominion of the infinitely blue sky.

My thoughts were all of one thing. Sometimes when they reached a pitch of complete hopelessness or delight I turned and lay chest downwards to the warm earth. I believe I should have hated even the sun to see my face at those moments. It wasn't that I was ashamed of that incredible passion brought about by an utter stranger, but that I was infinitely jealous about its secret preciousness. And that afternoon something in the spring air itself seemed to be watching me. I didn't feel alone. It was as if a spirit, aroused by some inner cry of my foolishly young heart, had crept out to torment me with all the quiet mysteriousness of its invisible presence.

Then, as I lay there trying to overcome by indifference my strange emotions, I became aware of another presence. A sound of feet, then a rustle of twigs was borne along to me. In a mood of wonderment I lay listening. Then a voice above me called my name.

I turned my astonished face to the glaring sky and blinked at the figure of a girl I saw there. Sitting up I recognised her as a girl named Martha, from the village. Behind her, giggling and nudging each other, were two of her friends, dressed like her, for Sunday. Angry at the intrusion I flung up into her face :

" What do you want with me ? "

Under the fierce reproach in the words she seemed to cower like a shy animal not comprehending a command. Her mouth looked as if about to burst into a torrent of weeping. Instead, she held out to me an envelope and asked in a faint voice :

" Would you give this to Julian Thorley ? "

I began to protest : " But—but why ? I shan't see him ! "

" It's Sunday. He always comes this way."

" Is it important ? "

One of the others broke in shrilly : " It's a love letter ! "

" Sssh. Oh ! "

The girl darted pitiful looks here and there like a guilty child. Gazing up into that sensitive face, scarlet in its extreme confusion, I hadn't the heart to refuse its naive request. A week of the most agonising abandonment to that other face hadn't hardened my heart, and I took the note with a promise. A minute later there was a sound of feet among the undergrowth in the wood and then the stillness of the hot, serene sky seemed to descend and suffocate me.

My alternate fits of gloom and ecstasy began again. The invisible spirit came out and renewed its dispassionate watch over me. Only now and then the naive image of a girl holding a pair of endless reins seemed to rise and briefly annihilate it with its loveliness.

A sound of whistling disturbed me at last. Martha's note, already crumpled from lying beneath me, was taken out and given to Julian Thorley as he passed. He took it with a smile and went on. As he turned the bend of the path and disappeared behind the wood a little shower of white butterflies seemed to fly from him and settle forlornly in the grass.

After that there seems to have been an immense desert of solitude where the mirage of a pale face constantly arose and tantalised me into pursuit of it, and at the end of which I was thirsty and tired as if from sickness of body and mind. I walked home through the dusky wood as if in a dream. My footsteps made echoes that soared swiftly up to the green roof and ran among the leaves like spirits, mocking me.

Suddenly, on turning a bend in the path I came upon Martha, the girl whose note I had delivered and already forgotten. Her lips lay parted in a sort of questioning smile which seemed to me

utterly hopeless and pathetic. Her eyes were never still as she asked :

" Did you see him ? "

" Yes. I gave it to him."

She whispered, " Thank you." She looked frightened in the silence which followed her words. Then she broke out :

" Did he read it ? "

" I think so."

" Did he say anything ? What did he say ? What did he do ? "

Her words seemed to confuse each other in their struggle for supremacy. I remained silent. Suddenly she burst out, womanishly, straight to the point :

" There's something you won't tell me ! "

I couldn't answer her. Then a repetition of the words seemed to strike my heart like a blow. I looked once again at that simple, piteous face waiting for me to blurt out a piece of information which I felt she hadn't the courage to endure without a passionate display of weeping. But no longer able to bear her repeated cry I told her with abrupt ingenuousness :

" He tore it up."

She started wildly. A few broken sounds escaped from her and fled up among the branches. Then there was no sound but that of the languid leaves and a bird or two among them. On her face a few tears glistened and dried. The lips opened in their old expectant way, but her eyes were sombre and dilated, as if she hadn't slept for weeks. I had to ask :

" Doesn't he care about you ? "

Her face wore an expression of wonder then of miserable resignation. Then she whispered slowly :

" They say—in the village they say I haven't a chance against Thomasin Dean."

In another moment I was conscious of a figure retreating among the trees. Then silence took her place. Until long after I stood gazing at the ground, crushing slowly and earnestly beneath my foot a piece of wood scarlet with ants, as if expecting to gain consolation from that deadly serious task. The sun began to go down as I stood there. A few shadows assembled darkly like a picket ready for patrol. The birds fluttered noisily among the leaves. Suddenly I caught the sweet vanilla scent of may borne in from the hedges on a faint wind. I held up my

head and at once all the sensations of all the springs of my life seemed to assail me as I breathed that unexpected fragrance. The next moment I saw, soberly and calmly, that for me the significance and magic of a woman's beauty must likewise lie in a single impression of a face beneath an umbrella in the gloom of a storm. It was like a revelation.

I remember throwing up my arms with a faint sigh as I resigned myself to that profoundly soothing thought. As I walked slowly from the wood I wasn't conscious of the faintest tremor of sadness or regret. Outside the evening was still and quiet, as if at a prayer. Faint and intoxicating the scent of may followed me over the darkening fields until my head was singing with joy.

Somewhere in the east, deceptively close and loud, a cuckoo called on and on, as if it were noon, and I laughed in return.

E. BETTS.

POET'S DELL.

NOT far from Marlow, lying between two white roads, there is a thicket. All through the summer it flares with yellow gorse, and with the approach of June sends out a paler radiance from the million cups of the dog-rose. The country hereabout is open and wind-crossed, with groups of trees, like satisfied philosophers, watching the year move round, and old cottages that can scarcely stand upright on the patch that bears them. At night the thicket is a solemn place and draws the country-lover away from the river (for so many months an Elysium of fashion) to the stillness up here, where tree and bush and earth are all woven into the silence.

I had had the notion always that a poet lived, or would come to live on the thicket, so suited it was to meditation and flights of fancy. Enquiry, however, spoke only of a popular lyric writer —such stuff as I might manage myself—who lived on a handsome estate five miles away, and the rumour then about that a famous man of letters was to buy a cottage overlooking the thicket, while it excited my hopes, eventually yielded nothing. Nevertheless, rumour is a womanish thing, full of comfort, and I felt sure the atmosphere would be less raw to meet the poet when he came.

On the thicket was a dell. It had a Shakespearean touch, the turf as magical as " the wood near Athens," with little green rises where Demetrius and Helena might have lain, and houses nearby whose windows sent a gold ray at night over the rim of the dell, curiously searching.

Feeling a certainty of the poet's appearance, I used to stroll every evening from Flint Cottage, where the cat and I were staying, over a velvety quilt of grass, and down into the dell. It smelt exquisitely of many odours ; it was cool and strange,

secret and fragrant, and I mooned about taking in this, and little of a more nourishing sort.

It was thus, one evening, that I met the poet—not the fellow whom report had foretold, but a personality no less striking. He sat in isolation on a knoll, a mad, splendid poet, wearing a ragged rotten coat, pleasantly green in places, and with no hat covering his bald head, which shone like a shilling. He was mumbling to himself over pieces of a large sandwich, and occasionally he sang in a muffled tone—sang into the bites, into the bread itself, so that one must be the meat to hear him clearly.

It seemed clumsy to intrude upon him, for his absorption in himself, his sandwich, and the verses he occasionally declaimed almost had the rapture of prayer. On several evenings I walked up and down in the dell without venturing remark of him, but always within friendly distance, always smiling (a little idiotically, I fear) in hope that he would turn my way. He sang on as if no one were there, and sometimes, with furious ostentation, scribbled on a scrap of paper. I spent several evenings in the dell, smiling and walking and " sighing and looking," like the king at Alexander's feast.

Consider my vexation when one evening I saw the poet talking to a stranger. He at once began to read extracts from his work to him, and when the two parted, it was plain the listener went off with the warmest words of praise. But he did not come again. I thought it strange that he did not come again. Others took his place—strollers, picnickers, lovers, cottage-hunters, Londoners, solitaries, and the local toothless. To all he read, chanted, hummed and piped his poems, though I could never find out what they were about, for none of his hearers were very clear in their report of him, and myself, I did not wish to become one of a crowd who were merely gratifying a desire for a free performance from the acknowledged comedian of the countryside. Towards me he was plainly indifferent, his policy seeming to favour the general run of idlers and gigglers, but to exclude those whose interest in his recital was of a deeper cast.

As my stay on the thicket was nearly at an end, I determined to have word of some sort with the poet while the chance remained. I approached him one night before he had attracted his customary audience. Friendly though he strove to be, he was undoubtedly nervous, as at some weapon I might have held

behind my back. His eyes had a light in them which was disconcerting, being now candid and merry, now hostile and greedy. His hands were slender, and despite their roughness and the dirt on them, must have been a fine shape once. But most astonishing of all was the quality of the verse he began to speak, not waiting my invitation. There was a familiar ring in some of the lines, and I took care to memorise them, feeling certain that the poems he had been declaiming as his own (written in his hand on a quire of paper) were pirated from the originals.

Returning to the cottage after cordial good-nights, I wrote down a passage for comparison :

> " Thou who dids't waken from his summer dreams
> The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
> Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams . . ."

It allowed of no doubt. The theft was a precise duplication. When next I visited the poet, therefore, I shamelessly suggested reading some of my own verses, borrowing them from Shelley and watching the effect of their recoil upon him. Not without a grudge he assented. The hour was late, and long swathes of gold and grey cloud made the air luminous and unearthly. It was raining a little, but in the heat of the time, we did not notice it. I began the last few stanzas of the ode he had recited to me, and had reached the line " Drive my dead thoughts over the universe," when the poet's eyes, which were possessed with fear the moment I began, lit up in dreadful frenzy. Through the midst of rain and gloom I saw his face working in fury. " Thief ! Blackguard ! " he shouted. " You have taken my poem. That's my poem, I tell you. You have stolen my child ! " His lighted eyes became tearful, he stamped his feet. There he stood in an attitude of terror, as if expecting to be killed, as if the blade were above him.

By now the people were approaching for their usual entertainment. He waited a moment in silence, then put the knuckles of his hands slowly to his eyes. His shaking figure bent and bent till he fell upon the ground, kicking about in frantic anger. This pitiful show, which amused and frightened most of the onlookers, soon left him exhausted. He got up, keeping his face turned away, and tramped across the dell, up through the bushes on to the thicket, and out of sight. And I, too, went home.

* * *

The winds were rising and the night hostile. A pale light wavered behind the trees to the west, and when I entered the cottage a capful of air leapt from the thicket behind me, banged the door to the wall, and blew out the candles in my room. Only the two yellow eyes of my black cat staring from a chair, and the familiar silence of the place, told me that this was the cottage where I lived, and that by the grace of Heaven, I was alone.

APPARITION.

BEYOND the steeple of Saint Michael's
A cloud stood like a crown of gold;
I saw the face of the Archangel,
Serene, immaculate and bold.

The light bathed all the town in amber,
The roofs swam with ethereal fire,
The burning hair of the Archangel
Flamed as the cloud ascended higher,

Till all the sky became one gesture
Of glory and glad apocalypse,
A sudden coronal of lilies,
A rushing of enchanted ships.

O wings of splendour, hands of blessing,
Sheer from that blazing cloud of gold!—
I saw the face of the Archangel,
Serene, immaculate and bold . . .

THE HIDDEN HARMONY

THE spring beneath the cave of emerald
Bubbles divinely forth with stainless gushes,
And when the young blood of the bright dawn flushes
The pale cheeks of the East, that grot is walled
With waves of plaintive music pure as snow ;
In the pulsations of that elfin choir.
The grass-green jewel trembles into fire
And moves and shakes, the fountains sing below.
Those that have heard the holy married strain
Of the live gem and the unsullied spring
See not the world with the same eyes again ;
For the fond incantation steeps their eyes
In memories of the Gardens of their King,
Dews of an unforsaken Paradise.

THE FIERY FACES.

THE dark grave town crouching upon her hill
Is scarred by sombre Time's corroding tooth,
But yet to her the blue March wind brings youth,
When the clear trumpet of the daffodil
Sends forth its silver music ; she has joy
Deeper in all her haggard poverty
Than cities Martha-wise bound ceaselessly
Upon the gainful wheel of grim employ.
Her riches are not gross and palpable things ;
Nay, in the shadows of her shuttered lanes,
In little pools left stranded by long rains,
Reflected from the gentle clouds that pass
Over her sunset heavens more clear than glass,
I have seen faces veiled in fiery wings . . .

RUPERT CROFT-COOKE.

THE QUEEN BEE.

A Sequence.

" Et la reine abeille, a qui obeit-elle ? A la nourriture qu'on lui donne . . . "—Maurice Maeterlinck, " *La Vie des Abeilles.*"

I.

HERE where we loved and were made one for ever
No vows were taken and no censers swing,
Our kisses made a bond too strong to sever,
My arms about you were our wedding-ring.
No priest united us, the distant foresters
Felling a tree rang out our wedding chimes,
The hungry birds our only choristers,
For nuptial hymn I made a few stray rhymes.
And bracken was our bed, its golden fitness
Our finding for this sacred episode,
A pale grey friar's ghost our only witness
Strayed for a moment from the Pilgrim Road.
Vision of white limbs on the golden bracken
And aisles of crooning trees ! O Clovenfeet,
Our love was yours, and though the green grass blacken
And shrivel with shame, your love knows no defeat.
O Clovenfeet ! O Clovenfeet ! O Clovenfeet !

II.

Together, dear heart, we came to a ruined city,
Where only a shattered wall and a broken column
And a fallen fragment of frieze told the vain story
Of a dead race, and a life lived out. In pity
Not for the dead but ourselves, we imagined the glory
Of good men gone, and slowly, with eyes grown solemn
And hands that were feeling for hands, and feet bewitched
We looked for a temple wherein to kneel and be sorry
For the things that we were, and the things that our sons would be.
And you, dear, were glad of the past, being young, and enriched
By stories that rose from the stones. As for me
I called to the sepulchred dead, buried line upon line,
In their little cool tombs, I called and awakened each corse,
To ask if the boys in their age knew love greater than mine,
Or if girls in their city had dimples more witching than yours.

III.

Something of earth not earthy have I found
Watching a triangle of starlit blue
Under a peak of canvas on the ground,
Alone with the night solitude, and you.

IV.

As winter came we would remember, love,
Lest life should give us not another spring
How we had loved in vine-yards, felt the sun
Over our limbs his golden mantle fling;
We would recall how under blue skies we
Swam in blue water, how we both had seen
Silently rowing down the lake at dusk
The pale ghost of our solemn Lamartine.

V.

When morning crept into the London streets
And set their wheels astir, you came at last
Into my arms ; but we were tired of love,
Like children who had sucked her coloured sweets
Till each had dwindled and dissolved. I cast
A listless arm about your beautiful shoulders
And so we lay, while the cold world went past
Under our window, so we lay together
Entirely comprehending, one warm fold
Of flesh between the sheets. I know not whether
We talked for long, but if we had grown old
In talking thus we should have been no nearer
To one another. I say our minds were one.
We thought identical thoughts. And this was dearer
Than all the reckless things we might have done.
At last came sleep, and though our tired heads touched
Each mind went on its secret quest, whose themes
Our own tongues cannot tell. Our hands were clutched
But were voyaging among separate dreams.

VI.

Now—for we let love follow holiday—
Returning musingly down life's highway
I have found that house we builded with our dreams,
It scarcely stands, so broken are its beams ;
It seems so distant and so long ago
So foreign and forgotten, that I know
Scarce if you live there yet, nor greatly care,
We loved, we were aware . . . and unaware.
Think not I mourn for you ; however brief
Your moments of regret, inconstant maid,
My own were briefer, indeed it is my grief
That I can mourn for none, that I am made
Invulnerable ultimately. Now
I make our love a tale, as vague and long
I give your lips the religion of a song,
You have become for me a wraith that speaks
Out of a printed past, through paper cheeks.
And so, imperious one, you move your eyes
As moves my pen ; your food shall be my lies,
Your drink, my truths ; your law shall be my rhyme ;
You are my petted phantom, you shall climb
Into a poem for a moment's life
And know the travail of a sonnet's wife.

PHILIP HENDERSON.

IN THE NIGHT.

IT is often curiously interesting to speculate on the almost incredibly large part played in the life of the mind by objects and ideas that are, in themselves, commonplace or actually devoid of individual significance. We frequently find ourselves, for instance, in the act of becoming totally absorbed in something, whether object or idea, that apparently exists for no other reason and serves no other purpose than that of being merely occasional, utilitarian or, at the most, mildly decorative. It may be that we are momentarily attracted by some subtle harmonization of colour or loveliness of line, and before we have realised the change of scene we find ourselves wandering in some remote dreamland of memory or being imperceptibly led back to a station on the road of our emotional experience that we had imagined to be so far in the distance as to be almost invisible. Then, the residue of past emotions will shine out from the surrounding greyness like a fine deposit of gold in the sand of some river bed of Eldorado. Yet the mental transition may be caused by something entirely trivial. A chianti bottle, for instance, roundly and comfortably placed at our elbow, the rush work of its base, the green glass of its neck reflecting the remaining wine, may effect a transformation in our perspective as might seem out of all proportion to the position of relative importance that such an object would ordinarily hold in our minds.

And yet . . . the remaining wine gleams invitingly across the table. In the falling lamplight the bottle looks romantic, alluring—almost voluptuous. I stretch out my hand to take it and in the act it seems as though I have touched some hidden nerve of response. It shivers like an electric wire . . . cold, yet aflame with a sudden flash of crystal fire. My mind fills with impulsive light like that which flickers round a darkened room at close of day, softly touching one familiar object after

another, lingering caressingly for a moment round the imprint of a head in the silk of a cushion, tinting with momentary brightness the cover of some book that has been lately read. As I sip my wine the vision of the chianti bottle leads me once more down the narrow side streets of Soho. I am going to that theatre which, although hidden away among the shops with their strings of onions hanging outside, and their long sausages in green, red and silver paper, is still recognised as fashionable and " West End." It was to this theatre that I came after every matinee and before every evening performance for the space of perhaps three months. It was winter. I remember the barrel organs playing in the rain, the lights from shop windows dissolving in mists that hovered over their own reflections in the shining roadway. I remember, at other times, my happiness being lifted to the purest exultation as I hurried along at half-past five in the evening up the narrow little streets, the air quivering with numberless points of frost, and with everyone shouting in Italian and French, so that the noise acted as an extra stimulus and combined like modern harmonization in music with the soft glow of fruit, piled up in pyramids and obelisks of colour. Further on, chrysanthemums curled in their delicate petals as though recoiling from the cold to some inner warmth.

Arriving at the theatre I would go round to the stage door and up a narrow flight of stairs to her dressing room. Here I would be greeted with the mysterious, almost Oriental smell of " make-up," in which seemed to be dissolved all the glamour and brilliance of the stage, flashed and refracted in many directions by long mirrors that stretched from the floor almost to the ceiling. Here she would be waiting for me. Once I was three-quarters of an hour late, but she was still waiting, her eyes sad and gentle with suspense. That night I called for her after the evening performance.

Anatole France tells us that had he been a god and had a hand in the creation of the universe, that he would have fashioned man in the model of the butterflies and winged insects. After passing through the chrysalis stage, he says, " then I should have arranged that, in a final metamorphosis, man and woman, unfurling glittering wings, lived awhile on dew and desire and died in a rapturous kiss. Thus I should have added love as a crown and recompense of their mortal existence." I thought that Anatole France had perhaps had something to do with my

creation, but that he had, in a moment of carelessness, reversed the process and reserved the dormant stage for my later years. For in my first youth, at the time of which I am speaking, I unfurled glittering wings and lived awhile on such " dew " and such desire as I have never since known.

The next day at breakfast she was perfectly charming. She said : " When I am drinking my coffee I always look out for the buttercup at the bottom of the cup. The more I drink I feel a secret childish happiness welling up inside me, for the lower the level of the coffee the more I see of the buttercup. When I first see the uppermost edge of its golden petals I want to laugh outright with joy." All the day we sat about, talking and smoking cigarettes. We both took a delight in watching each other's slightest movement, especially as she said, " it is funny to look at one another again after what has happened," and when she spoke I experienced a calm joy, a contentment intensified into something more than contentment, but less than ecstasy.

As the evening approached and the light was turned on, it seemed as though we had always lived together, as though yesterday was some age in the neolithic past, and when to-morrow came—but we could not visualise to-morrow, except that it was a misty land exquisitely remote. Only the present, warm, intimate and completely self-absorbed, existed. " Shall I tell you what first attracted me to you ? " she said. But it would be difficult to convey with the necessary delicacy what she did actually tell me—not, of course, that it was anything . . .

Pulling a large leather box from under the bed she took out a few long rolls of paper. When she had unrolled them, they turned out to be theatrical bills, advertising the performances of plays and the names of the principal artists in large lettering. She pointed to several well-known names and then to her own with an intense satisfaction, veiled by an almost too elaborate carelessness. " Here you see the various places where we have played : Paris, New York, Berlin . . ." It was not so much vanity as youth that prompted her and a very natural desire, under the circumstances, to better the already good impression that she had made upon me. For, as I turned to her with frank admiration, her pose of carelessness utterly broke down and she blushed with all the ingenuousness of her nature.

In some ways it is curious to think of the extent to which love enriches one's personality and intensifies the power of

receptivity. For, from that time I found myself sensitive to all manner of impressions, colours and word music, that, in the past, would have passed me by without awakening any kind of response in my nature. I found that such works as the " Seventh Symphony " and " Tristan," on being approached, at once took on relative proportions in my mind, where before I had been enraptured but completely overwhelmed by them. I found that love—which is the most convenient word to describe such a collection and concatenation of emotions—had developed my sense of value to an extent that would have taken years of my life had any other means been employed. I was enabled to look down from my seat at Queen's Hall or Covent Garden as from a spiritual height, and to feel the structure of these works gradually rising against the darkness of my lowered eyelids. I was enabled to keep them, as it were, at a distance, resisting the temptation to throw myself into their whirlpool and become wholly absorbed in an intoxication of sound and emotion, a temptation like that which exists for some neurotic people when they sense the steely thunder of an approaching express train. The truth of the matter was that I had for the first time in my life experienced something big. I had, in fact, been moved and possessed by the greatest force in the world. And because of the limitations and state of undevelopment of our souls the big things of life seem to us infinitely greater than the big things of art, so that I stood not only level, but above them.

Our early dinners before the evening performance used always to be a source of agonised delight. They were mostly composed of Italian food and indigestion. She would look at her watch saying there were only five minutes more, causing me to protest in plaintive tones that surely she need not be in the theatre for at least another ten minutes. At this she would laugh and we would forget the time in talking and looking across the table at each other, astonished at the wave of harmony, the transfusion of love that, like a cold breath, seemed to catch at our throats every time we began to speak, and that circled us round like the sound of some warm musical voice in its small convoluting ring of intoxication. The line of her eyelid, a quiver in the corner of her lips, contained for me everything that life could hold of delight or pain. Her hair at the back was short like a boy's and this feminine boyishness that pervaded her personality added a quality of cleanness and decision to her movements that was

entirely unanticipated, and was therefore all the more charming when it came.

By degrees I began to know the quality of her mind. But however I should have judged it at more impartial moments, at the time it bore no more weight in my affection for her than the shape of her little finger nail. A friend once said, hearing my dubious opinion of a lovely, but brainless-looking girl, that he had picked out at a neighbouring table in a restaurant, that it was a pity that I should always demand a " mind." On this occasion I did not demand one, and, for some reason, I had never been more completely intoxicated with happiness in my life, nor for that matter, have I ever been since. After all, youth with all its foolishness and inconsistency is naturally more desirable than the intelligent conversation of a girl who has read Bergson and Freud. It was sufficient for her to express an opinion as new that I had long regarded as a platitude for me to thrill to immediate appreciation. To watch her while she spoke was of more importance to me than her opinions. Consequently I found myself remarking of the most inept platitude : " Charming . . . Is that what they think in Paris ? . . . How original ! "

There is a particular café in Soho to which we used always to go. Although it possessed nothing to distinguish it from the other restaurants of that quarter, we were at first attracted to it by a friendly alcove at the back of the shop. Not, of course, as she was so fond of saying, that we wished to communicate our affection to one another by any of the traditional signs expected of commonplace people in such cases, yet we were sincere enough not to make use of the airs of elaborate detachment assumed by certain of the " moderns." The marble tables and the fruit dishes imparted that cool, Continental atmosphere peculiar to Soho, while the young men and women of genius who came there supplied it with the gratifying labels of " artistic centre " and " resort of Bohemians." In many cases these young people were attracted to the neighbourhood more by a peculiar kind of snobbishness that affects to enjoy shoddiness under the title of " a place where life ferments " than by any circumstance that compelled them to choose a restaurant where the cheapest food might be obtained. They vastly preferred to take their fried eggs in the company of road-breakers and cab-drivers than with the more " uninteresting " bank clerks and typists at a banal Lyons tea-shop. But because these people were far too taken

up with keeping a sharp look-out for any signs of interest that might conceivably be exhibited towards them, they won our sympathy by not disturbing us with unwelcome attention on their side.

How was I to know that the smile of the delightful signorina who served us would, in time, become more and more tinged with cynicism in proportion to the number of new and charming " friends " I brought with me to the restaurant? At first, however, she beamed with all the sunshine and hospitality of the South itself. For as we sat over a meal that was not quite so hurried as usual—although this did not happen very often—she would look across at us from behind the counter when there was a lull in the serving, so that I often caught her smile in one of the heavily-mounted mirrors that flanked the walls. On one occasion, as I lingered over my coffee later in the evening, alone at our table, she came over and sat down opposite me with chin propped up by elbows and told me, over a glass of wine, her troubles and the history of her short life. She was nineteen, so she said, and, in spite of the vigilance of her parents had had " many affairs." But when I asked her amusedly whether she was prepared for yet another to add to her " many," she sighed and looked at me out of very large serious eyes, apparently lost in thought. Her parents, she said, were very strict . . . they were terrible, and she was never allowed to stay out after eleven. . . . But for a long time after that she served us immediately upon our entrance, until, one evening, a handsome young Italian made his appearance in the restaurant, following her with his eyes and continually displaying glittering teeth as he smiled romantically in her direction. And from that time we were compelled to wait for our orders to be carried out in rotation with all the other customers. Afterwards, I discovered the young Italian to be her husband, newly returned to London from Alassio for the purpose of opening a restaurant with his wife, in another part of Charlotte Street.

There were times when, instead of calling for her at the theatre, I went direct to the café. Then, the very bright electric light made the rows of tumblers glitter along the glass shelves of the counter, and they would sing faintly when the nasal voices shouted orders down the hatch of the serving lift. I used to sit at our table, glancing up every now and then from the book I was trying to read, to the door, where a square of glass hung suspended

like a smoothly cut-out sheet of water, reflecting the blueness of the night outside. I returned to my book, only to glance up again after the lapse of a minute or so when the sheet of water would be precipitously projected into the room, so that I held my breath, thinking that everybody near the door would suddenly spring from their tables drenched to the skin and stamping with rage. But no, the suddenness with which the door was opened did not seem to disturb the perfection of its balance in the very least. It returned calmly to its place after sending a breath of cold air whirling amongst the haze of tobacco smoke.

But it was not she who entered. This time I returned to my book and became so absorbed in it that I knew nothing of her entrance till she had pulled out the chair with a clatter from under the table and sat down opposite me. She was very pale and looked tired, as though she had passed through something, the endurance or enjoyment of which had greatly strained her nerves. The high-necked jersey accentuated the paleness of her face, and the white shadows about her mouth. Naturally, I was concerned. But when I mentioned that I thought she looked unusually tired, she became furious, saying that she was tired because she had to work for her living. At this, the first words that had been spoken between us in anything but complete sympathy, I felt myself suddenly deprived of volition and every other feeling save the uselessness of life and living. Yet pride caused me to assume an apparent coldness and indifference. She must have seen through my disguise and realised how much pain she had caused, for the next minute she was begging my forgiveness, her eyes soft with tears.

It would be hard to say what constituted the charm that was the essence of her personality. Perhaps it was mainly due to the fact that she had the power of keeping me perpetually astonished, never allowing that paralyzing sense of sameness, that is often the cause of unhappiness under conditions otherwise ideal, to creep into our relations; astonishment never ceased to grow between hand and shoulder. She retained in me, right from the first moment of our meeting, the idea that however well I could know her there would still remain some subtle odour of passion, some just perceptible thrill of exoticism of which I had never before known the existence or never till then experienced. She retained for me the illusiveness that is possessed only by those who give themselves without reserve, filling me at the same time

with that exquisite dissatisfaction that causes us to follow someone across half London because we desire to know more of an eyelid that has quivered beneath our glance or a mouth that has half-smiled in spite of itself in answer to our silent greeting. We sense a warm and sympathetic personality under the conventionally impassive countenance, and a nature that desires our caresses none the less ardently because it does not openly solicit them. The thought of going away to some place removed from the distractions and irrelevant interests of London, to some spot where we might fully submerge our personalities one with the other and live in that calm clarity of spirit that spreads itself over our lives for days at a stretch when each infinitesimal desire and ripple of passion has been realised and resolved into the harmonious working of our natures, gave us a sensation of delicious pleasure. Had we been more experienced we might have known that the very obstacles that came in the way of our doing all we wished, the unwelcome circumstances that put us to such a railing against fate, were the very forces that, reacting on the perversity of our natures, held us together and intensified our pain and pleasures to a greater extent than any amount of freedom could have ever done.

But about this time, at the height of our love for one another —I say " height " because although the moments in which our dual natures jarred and came into conflict were becoming increasingly frequent, they were more than ever balanced by moments when such ecstasies of emotion were reached as we never before thought possible—she suddenly announced that she would be obliged to leave me in order to fulfil an engagement that would take her over to Paris for a period the length of which she said was quite indefinite. And at my expression of pain, instead of becoming consoling as I naturally expected, she flew into a rage, saying that progress was more important to her than anything else, and that I could not love her very greatly if I wished to arrest her development by detaining her in London. She flushed as she spoke and tears came to her eyes. At the time I supposed this to be a sudden outburst of anger and revulsion of feeling provoked by the mere idea of prolonging our relations for a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. Since then I have looked upon it both as the traditional fiery pose of an artist standing in defence of the work that is self-expression and therefore life to her, and also as a cloak under

which to hide the genuine pain that any break in our relations might cause her. Although why she should wish to hide such natural pain from me seemed equally mysterious, unless she was unwilling to do anything that might prove flattering to my vanity! Finally, I decided upon the first explanation, because the word " pose " in every sense made clear many past situations that were at the time meaningless to me. Similar outbursts which, when I could find no other explanation, I fell back on to the unsatisfactory " excess of temperament," have since resolved themselves in my mind into that type of attitudinizing common among certain people not devoid of talent who, at all times, seem particularly anxious to be recognised as artists. Although these outbursts of hers were perfectly sincere in so far as she herself believed in them, and doubtless, at such times she felt as deeply as when she was delivering her part at the theatre: in each case acting on the same principle, that unless she herself believed deeply in the words she was saying, although they may not have been the expression of her true nature, they would not " get over." Whether these thoughts passed through her mind or not on such occasions has always remained, for me at any rate, a mystery. I realised, on the other hand, that we often credit someone with a complex temperament when in reality they are nothing more than a vortex of conflicting poses.

From that time she seemed to make use of every possible opportunity either for hurting or irritating me. And my nature was so entirely subjugated to hers that the occasions on which I rebelled against such treatment were rare. It is, in fact, humiliating to think of the many instances when an assertive move would have completely changed her tone and, for all I knew, have given me the ascendancy. But such treatment of me was greatly due to her lack of that sensitiveness, that delicacy of taste where other people's feelings are concerned (for which no amount of culture or " intellectuality " will atone) that refinement of tact that may be summed up—although in these days it may sound slightly snobbish to some people—in the word breeding. And the lack of this quality she concealed under the pose of brutality, of " force " so often affected by modern artists, as though they were ashamed of having advanced from their barbaric ancestors, preferring to stifle the sensitiveness that accompanies material comfort and spiritual development, under a guise of voluntary navvyism and revolt against their natural

COL. T. E. LAWRENCE.
Author of "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom."
Bust by Eric Kennington.
Exhibited at "The Leicester Galleries," London, February, 1927.

refinement. Unfortunately she was a prey to that common vanity that seeks to find satisfaction in humiliating those within its power, as though the mere state of personal ascendancy did not generate in the noblest minds feelings of a protective and affectionate nature. At other times she cunningly concealed her vulgar tastes under another type of pose which did not entirely belong to her, but which became, when she practised it, a pose within a pose. For some time since her comparative success on the stage she had acclimatised herself to the company of those " intellectuals " who, dreading in the modern fashion that their superior mental qualities might be suspected and might lead them into snobism, adopt an attitude of mind which pretends to enjoy, as expressions of human nature, ridiculously crude and boring performances at third rate music halls and cinemas. Thus she was enabled to indulge her tastes to the full without impairing the intellectual image of herself that she had so cleverly built up in the minds of her friends. While I, for my part, not possessing the necessary universality of interest and not being amused by this particular pose, was agonizingly bored on these expeditions to those shoddy quarters of the town to which the expression of her natural tastes led us. And thinking myself in reality vastly inferior to her in outlook, these expeditions proved to be regular sources of humiliation, although outwardly, to the best of my ability, I appeared to be enjoying myself in the same honest, straightforward, refreshingly primitive way no less than any one of my companions. On our return I listened to her affected remarks about the " types " we had encountered, and sometimes she wrote short stories about them which she would read to me with all the pride of a creator, expecting the commendation that somehow I could never find it in my heart to give.

For some weeks before she went to Paris she tortured me (probably quite unconsciously, although only a little thought was needed to show her what she was doing) by talking of nothing else. Immediately, all that I knew from my own experience, all that I had read and imagined of that city rose up before me like the seductive visions that in times gone by Venus sent to tempt the starved bodies of the Coenobites in the Egyptian deserts. And the more I was prevented from realising these dreams by circumstances the more vivid they became and, with her help, prolonged. I imagined myself waking in one of those delicate

Parisian rooms we read about in Pierre Loti, where everything, even the air, has the whiteness and smoothness of enamel I thought of the exquisite sense of languor waking, when no particular urge of necessity takes us out of bed, when we float in a warm world of semi-consciousness and things half-revealed, when sleep becomes a refined pleasure that may be touched and toyed with, when our eyelids close from us the world of reality and we rise and fall, fall and rise in the rhythm of our breathing, and all the while we keep dropping off into little sleeps that only last the intaking of a breath and that caress us with a softness that is not attained to either in the hands of our lovers or in the spirituality of our wine. Later, wonderfully calm and refreshed, we get up and let the cool waters of our bath slip over us, have our light breakfast of coffee and rolls, and then, still dreamy, saunter out into the new glittering air of the boulevard. After walking for a short time we go into a palatial magazin to try our French, make silly little explanatory gestures, and to laugh at ourselves with the girl who serves us. Then we buy a morning paper, delighted to feel ourselves in touch with a life so new, so light-hearted, so essentially different from our own. This life, we feel, the delicate life of the body when the mind sleeps, is the ideal, the only life. The large brazier in the entrance to the café where we are sitting burns and smoulders in the fresh wind. We watch its glow for a moment and laugh. The air seems to possess the tenderness of milk and to be light and lyrical with the singing of thousands of invisible birds. . . .

She would smile and tell me that people " over there " are more indulgent than they are in England ; that they understand things that over here we condemn, and that they do without all kinds of stupid conventions. Especially, that they are more enthusiastic about art and that everybody you meet is willing to sit down and talk to you about your work and ideas. And because of all this, she said, I should adore it and that I should therefore come over with her. I replied that in my opinion there was too much affectation in Paris art circles and that, instead of having them laughed at, I should prefer to keep my work and my ideas to myself. And as I happened to be a fervent admirer of Wagner and Beethoven, I was sure that I should not fit in. But I was only defending myself. I should have given anything to have gone with her. As she spoke, she flushed and looked so charming that I wanted to take her in my arms and swear never to leave

her again. She was going away and would take with her all the warmth and colour that life had momentarily revealed to me.

The more excited she became during our dinners, the less I could eat, and all that I managed to convey from the plate to my mouth gave me violent indigestion as in the old days. The very word Paris seemed to exercise a subtle and (because it took her away from me) poisonous influence over her. According to her, Paris seemed to have a monopoly of the joys of life—everything was Paris. Till, in the end, I became so heartily sick of the very sound of the word that nothing on earth would have induced me to accompany her over there. For another thing I was secretly pleased that she was going. But so absorbed had I become in her that I could not reconcile myself to the parting, which I saw now more clearly than ever was inevitable. Had the choice been left in my hand, I dread to think of the ultimate consequences. Since the very first day of our meeting, my nature had been in a turmoil. Work had become impossible and every projection of my brain that did not concern her was colourless and feeble. While she, on the contrary, seemed to rise on wings of heightened endeavour and I lay in the grass. Her artistic instinct and insight became keener, the sound of her voice as she spoke seemed to intoxicate her, and the movements of her body transformed themselves into a perfect joy. Her self-confidence increased day by day. In fact, she was developing along every line of progress. For the time being I lived in a little fragile glass world of momentary construction, colour was a drifting mist, energy a fall of frost that melted as soon as it came, leaving the faculties paralysed and numbed. More than anything else, I desired stillness and peace, but I had no strength to stretch out my hand and take it. Silence was more dear to me than sound and rest more acceptable than action of the mind. My world needed to be rebuilt with new values and maintained by a harder, cleaner, less susceptible foundation. I desired to be more self-sufficient, less dangerously sensitive and removed to a plane of clearer, more analytical, vision. Then a wonderful new future would open out like that seen by a convalescent after his eyes have been purified with the fires of pain, as he sits in the half-light while his world remoulds itself to a vision strengthened by the long thought of sleepless nights.

Eventually the day of her departure arrived. I accompanied her to the station and found a seat in the Continental express, and

after protestations that seemed to me false and affected, we said good-bye and heard the last of each other by promising to write every day. I remember that this final falsehood annoyed me, particularly so, that I was really exceedingly pleased to think that the cause of so much recent pain was making her way to the coast with ever-increasing speed, until all that was left of the vision of her was a few shining strands of smoke melting on the air. I returned home and went straight to bed.

With eyes open on the darkness I lay awaiting the oncoming tides of sleep. They approached tentatively, like the first six little waves before the great seventh ; they curled over, revealing for a moment a curve of grey and crystal that broke, running up the shingle, as it were, towards me, not quite reaching the point of unconsciousness that I knew would submerge body and mind. But gradually, with the incoming tide, they lengthened out, spreading their pale waters above me. Gradually they soaked down with scarcely a sound, till at last the surge grew monotonous, making a replete silence of its own.

FRANTIŠEK LANGER.

THE RAT-CATCHER AND THE HARLOTS.

(*Authorised Translation from the Czech by Paul Selver.*)

DURING Passion Week a rat-catcher was sent into a house of ill-fame to catch the mice, whose squeaking and scuffling unpleasantly disturbed the nightly pleasures and revels. This was the most fitting time for such work, because no guests entered the house, as now, in the season of penitence, they were kneeling upon the cold flagstones of churches. Moreover, the council had placed a ban upon taverns and houses of ill-fame.

And so the rat-catcher arrived as evening was coming on, and in his knapsack he carried traps and poisoned bacon. In complexion the rat-catcher was not unlike the mice which he had come to destroy ; he was all gray, shinily gray with greasy uncleanness, except his hat, which was of dog-skin or some such material and deep fox-red in colour. In the ante-room he threw off the bag from his shoulders and shook the traps and pieces of bacon on to the brick floor. In order to spread the smell of bacon throughout the house, he kindled a pine log in the fireplace, and fried the bacon on it. The heavy and sweetish smell of singed bacon spread everywhere and penetrated the rat-holes in the passages, under the stairs, in cellars and chambers. He set up the traps in twos by the larder, in the kitchen, by the fireplace, and singly by the gulley in the courtyard and in the wood-loft, while here and there he scattered strips of the bacon, green with a swiftly killing poison. Then he sat down on the stairs. It grew dusk, and through the grimy skylight, which illuminated the stairs and the somewhat spacious ante-room, came less and less light, and this made him drowsy. And as it was now as quiet as the dead of night, in the rooms could be heard the laughter and the whispered talk of the harlots, who

were idly sprawling on the beds, or quietly playing cards for numbers, because they had no money.

The rat-catcher threw himself down on the ground, stretched his long, thin legs out a little, laid his hands under his head, and watched the skylight grow darker and darker till it was quite dark.

Then one of the harlots half-opened a door. She laid a pine-log in the holder, and the light fell in a streak from the doorway right on to the recumbent rat-catcher. She called the rest to come and look at the strange arrival.

Suddenly in the kitchen could be heard the squeaking of a captured rat. The rat-catcher went to the trap and killed the animal, which, with its neck squeezed by the spring against the wood, was twitching violently with its whole body, and stiffening its tail convulsively ; he killed it with a mallet on a long stick which he carried in his belt. Then he took the animal by the tail, threw it into his bag and set the trap again.

The harlots slammed the door to, shrinking from the mere sight of how he had picked it up.

The rat-catcher, not noticing them, heard a squeaking from the cellar passage, and he therefore went downstairs. There a mouse lay writhing on its back, having devoured a piece of the poisoned bacon. He had to put an end to it and remove it, so as not to frighten away the others. He crushed it beneath his heel.

When, after a while, he had gone up again, he came upon all the six harlots, who had run out of their room, just as they were, only in their underwear, to look at a new rat which in the meanwhile had got caught in the second trap. This time, too, they fled, but only to the opposite side, so as to see how with a blow with his stick he would kill the captured animal and throw it among the rest.

They watched him with unconcealed wonderment accompanied by an occasional " Oh, oh," or an invocation of saints, male and female. Finally, they all screamed with fear when the rat-catcher, enlivened by their presence, brandished the dead rat in the air, holding it by its long hind legs, as if he wanted to throw it at them. But he did not do so, and thrust it among the rest. The harlots marvelled at him, shaking their heads at the courage with which he handled these loathsome animals.

He smiled at them good-humouredly, and when he saw

that they were approaching him, he finally asked them for a drop of beer.

The most venturesome one among them, slow of movement, with plump and perfectly rounded arms, who by prayer to St. Catherine had been miraculously cured of the French disease, brought him beer in a jug with broken edge and handle. He drank it up at one draught.

Meanwhile the other harlots were inquisitively approaching the rat-catcher, although still with an unconcealed feeling of disgust. They encircled him. He knew that if he were to turn round they would all run away, but for nothing in the world would he have ventured to drive away these six women dressed only in their underwear, who step by step drew ever nearer and closer to him. At last they even stretched out their arms, and two or three fat fingers touched his clothes, recoiling as soon as they felt the greasy leather of his breeches.

But one of them declared that he was quite a fine fellow, and another, who was already wearying of a whole week's abstinence, invited him to come into their room.

The rat-catcher did not need much pressing. His mallet for killing rats he put into a corner, and in a somewhat ungainly manner he followed the harlots, wishing to make himself quite at home with them. But in the room they did not know what to do and how to set about continuing their pranks. They did not venture to lay hands upon him. His leather jacket with the ragged sleeve-ends, just like a knacker's coat, and his breeches drawn together by three straps below his paunch, were slimy with dirt, so that they still drew back in disgust from them.

One of them suggested that he should strip himself of these loathsome garments. At this the rat-catcher looked sheepish, but he took off his jacket and his close-fitting and sorrily tattered trousers. The harlots helped him, taking the various garments by their finger-tips and then kicking them into a corner. Two who were sitting on the side of the bed and looking on at this performance were wagering their combs as to whether he had scabies or itch. But as his body was quite clean there arose a brawl between them, when she who had won wanted to take the combs from her rival's hair.

In the meantime the rat-catcher stood stark naked in their midst ; he was not in the least ashamed. His body was completely white, a mildewy white like mushroom roots, untouched by the

sun and undisturbed by the wind. It had, moreover, an odour of mouse-flesh. He was lean, and knots, so to speak, were formed by his long legs about the knees, by his arms about the elbows.

Then he was pelted with the stalks of dried peas and the cores of gnawed apples, but he offered no resistance and twisted his mouth into a smile. The harlots seated themselves on the chairs, and some even sat on the table in a very lecherous manner. The remainder sprawled on the beds. The rat-catcher sat on the ground and shivered with cold, although the room was thoroughly heated. Squatting on his haunches the while, he slid along towards the fireplace.

For a long time he pondered over the words which he should say to them. He was not accustomed to speaking with women. at last he stammered :—

" I know you."

" He knows us."

" Where from, knight ? "

" You go to the bath. I have seen you on the way running along in your underwear, and holding it tight to keep the wind from uncovering it. I have seen you in the street."

He had probably seen them going to the bath on the first Friday in the month, after they had undressed at home, if it did not happen to be too cold. They always ran along quickly. Through the lower street as far as the river, where the baths were.

They answered him back, but then he ceased to interest them. They spoke only one with the other, and again turned to the dice.

Then he began afresh :—

" I will give you something. I will make something for you."

" Eh ? "

" I will make you little leather caps of beautiful rat-skin, if you like."

" Ugh, ugh."

" That is a delicate skin, fine as silk. The fur shines just like a weasel's."

But none of them felt allured by his gift. He wanted to tell them that he had two silver buttons hidden away somewhere, but that would have been too great a gift.

He stopped speaking, and the women said nothing : only the ones who were gambling shouted the number of the points.

He looked at the half-naked and nude women with a bewildered glance, with a foolish gape.

Then the door opened. From without could be heard the squeaking of rats. He was just propping himself up with his hand on the ground to raise himself to his feet, when an exceedingly beautiful woman entered the door. She smiled when she saw the strange naked man on the ground by the fireplace.

She was exceedingly beautiful. And she was named accordingly. When the emperor had returned from his Italian campaign in the previous year she had walked naked at the head of the triumphant procession, bearing an armful of flowers. The flowers had fallen from her naked arms, and for each one there had arisen a brawl among the spectators, who, in order to seize them, had even flung themselves beneath the hoofs of the horses as they advanced in front of the emperor's pomp. On that day, so the story goes, someone said of her, that she was so beautiful that even white stallions from the Italian spoil, when they were led past her, snorted wildly, lifted their heads, and uprose on their hind legs as if they scented a mare.

In a few words the rest told her whom they were entertaining. She laughed with them, and stood in front of the rat-catcher.

She spoke to him and then, when he looked at her from close by, his teeth began to chatter.

At first he did not speak, but when she asked what he would give her, he started talking.

He promised her more than the rest. A leather jacket, not only a cap. And he mentioned the two buttons.

She laughed merrily until her sides shook.

Then, after a moment's wavering, he said :—

" I know nothing of women."

He stretched out his fingers towards her.

" I have never touched one."

Then the fair one turned round and shouted something to the rest. They all ran up and laughed, and he realised that they were laughing at his virginity. They danced round in a circle and sang :—

" The green wreath that doth grow
On willow and poplar, oh,
Oh, oh, oh . . . "

All the bodies danced round him.

" The green wreath we bestow
On thee, shy virgin, oh,
Oh, oh, oh . . . "

And from time to time a foot would touch his body with an intentional kick. One on his arm, another on his leg, another on his belly. Either with the rounded heel or the soft toes.

At last he rose up and flung himself upon them like a bull. He clutched at them, he blindly chased after them. At first they escaped, running frightened into the corners. He chased after the fair one, and threw her on to the ground. But she began to resist desperately. He was weak ; he gripped her by the throat. She flung him beneath her, and began to strangle him and strike his head. He resisted, and covered her with blood. Now the rest of the women approached to help her. He hit out, and with the claw-like nails of his long fingers he ripped off pieces of their flesh. Then they all leapt upon him, battered him with logs, with the wood-holder, threw a heavy chair at him, gelded him, tore his hair and his ears, flayed his limbs.

A great madness came upon them.

They danced about, dragging from him strips of flesh and entrails, which oozed from his rended belly.

All the pangs of passion, which had been blunted by their trade, were aroused, entering their naked arms, their nails and teeth, changing into a passion for murder.

They ripped him to pieces.

They flung the torn limbs on to the dung-heap. The stench lasted a long time, for the grave-digger would not bury them. No funeral-knell was sounded for the rat-catcher, nothing. Moreover, it was Passion Week, on all sides was stillness and silence, in the hostelries and taverns, as well as in the house of ill-fame.

Later, because it was a matter concerning such unclean persons as a rat-catcher and harlots, the law did not even interfere in this occurrence. It is said the harlots that year were fresher and more enticing than ever before, and immoderately lewd.

LIAM O'FLAHERTY.

THE CHILD OF GOD.

IN the village of Liosnamara there was a peasant family called O'Toole. The village was beside the sea. All the other inhabitants were fishermen, because all the land in the village was a barren rock except the fifteen acres which O'Toole possessed. Therefore the fishermen, who risked the danger of the Atlantic, despised O'Toole as a landlubber; and O'Toole, having land, despised the fishermen who had none. On this account O'Toole and his family were more or less at enmity with the rest of the village.

This enmity was instinctive and not active in any sense; because all the fishermen were at heart gentle and simple people. O'Toole, on the contrary, was an extraordinary, complex fellow.

They called him Red Michael in the village because of his reddish hair and beard. He was a lean, little man, with a long, crooked nose, small grey eyes that were always red at the corners and with deep furrows in his forehead. He always looked old, even when he was a young man. He was a silent fellow as a rule and he preferred being alone to mixing with the villagers. Even when he visited the broad flag in front of the village, where the men conversed in the evening, he stood in the rear, with his hands clasped behind his back, leaning forward, craning his neck and listening suspiciously as if he expected something malicious to be said of him. They talked of fish, nets and the tides; whereas O'Toole was only interested in land. In this way he had no outlet for his thoughts. They considered him to be a mean, dour, avaricious man, the very demon for work.

Sometimes, however, he was seized with an irresistible desire to go on a drinking bout. He might be digging in a field when this desire came. If so, he hurled his spade to the ground. He rushed home. With violent oaths he demanded all the money in the house. He ransacked the cupboards until he found the

money, because his wife hid the long, embroidered, folding, cloth money purse in unusual places. If there was no money, he took a few yards of frieze cloth or even a young pig to the shopkeeper at the postal village of Carra. He sold whatever he took for half its price. Then he began to drink.

As a rule the drinking bout lasted a week. During the week the dour, industrious, silent man became an abandoned libertine. He was garrulous. He fought. He visited the loose woman of the district. He went about in a filthy condition. He begged money from the doctor, the curate and even from the magistrate. When all his money was spent he returned home. He went on his two knees to his wife and begged her to beat him. If she refused he rolled on the floor and wept. Then she beat him and he was comforted. He returned to work and he seemed quite normal until the time arrived for another bout.

His wife was also an unusual woman. She was of a much finer type than her husband. She was in no sense pretty, but she had a commanding figure, tall, well built, with a powerful head. Her square sallow face bore a strange resemblance to the face of a lioness. She had large, brooding, menacing, blue eyes. Her hair was black and each strand was strong and stiff. Being a peasant's wife she kept at a distance from the fishermen's wives. She hardly ever entered into conversation with them, but went about " with her head in the air." Possibly she was ashamed of her husband's occasional depravity and in order to hide her shame from the other women she kept aloof from them. She really was a refined and sensitive woman.

The village people thought she was a bit queer, but they admired her. They thought her queer because she had a habit of looking out over the cliff tops at the sea with her hands clasped on her bosom like a man, standing motionless for an hour at a time. They liked her for her generosity. She had a cow, the only one in the village, and she gave the others milk ; free of course.

In the first years of their married life the O'Toole couple had two sons and a daughter. They were normal, healthy children, who gave no trouble to their parents and their parents did not take any particular interest in them, as is customary among peasants. The father continued his periodic drinking bouts and the mother stared at the sea. And then, when the youngest child was thirteen years old, another son was born.

They called him Peter. Red Michael was then forty-four and Mary, his wife, was forty.

The event aroused considerable curiosity in the village. The men made fun of Red Michael, laughingly calling him a wicked old rascal. " After thirteen years," they said, " who would expect it of you ? " Instead of laughing with them, Red Michael became furiously angry. He vented his spleen on the baby. The other children were also teased by the village children. So they also grumbled at the unwelcome baby. Added to that, the baby was a weakling. It caused dreadful annoyance for many months by contracting every possible disease with which babies are cursed.

" I say woman," Red Michael bawled at his wife, " you have given birth to a fairy child. There's a spell on him."

" No," said the wife, " but he's a child of God. Prosperity will enter your house, Red Michael, with this son of mine."

Strangely enough, the mother, who had been indifferent to her other children, was madly in love with this squalling mite. She often stayed up all night crooning to him. Red Michael was amazed and almost terrified, watching his hitherto sombre and silent wife becoming as playful as a young girl and as tender as a sheep towards the miserable little weakling. He became very melancholy. He ceased going on drinking bouts. He no longer visited the broad flag. He spent the evenings by his fireside, brooding in silence and watching his wife counting the little naked toes of the baby that sprawled on her lap.

" There's witchery in this," he muttered.

For days at a time he never spoke a word to his family, or indeed to anybody.

But as the years passed his wife's prophecy came true. The family began to grow prosperous. Probably it was through his wife's efforts, because she became a very demon for thrift. She made everybody bustle. She nagged at her husband until she forced him to do various little jobbing contracts. She procured a position for her daughter Margaret as waitress at the hotel in the town, and a little later the second son, John, entered the service of the same hotel as a coachman. The eldest son, Joseph, became a carpenter. And these three children were industrious, dutiful, temperate and intensely religious. The mother drew every penny of their savings from them. Every penny went into the long, embroidered, cloth purse. But still the father

grumbled. He grumbled because his two sons had deserted the land of their ancestors.

" What am I working for ? " he cried. " Who is to come after me ? Amn't I disgraced entirely, with one fine son a common tradesman and the other making a show of himself, driving every rascal in the town all over the place ? And isn't it a shame to have my daughter slaving on a neighbour's floor ? And will ye tell me, Mary, what good will that weakling, Peter, ever be, to tear up the fallow soil or build a fence of heavy stones ? Ach ! "

" You fool ! " answered his wife angrily. " Do ye think I'd let my children spend their lives in this miserable village ? Wasn't I lonely and sad here all my life myself ? And what good is your land ? A few rocks. No, Michael. I'll never let one of my children be a slave same as I am. And as for my little Peter "—here her voice became tender—" he'll be the best of them all. He'll be a clerk in the town and he'll come home to his mother on a bicycle. Won't they all be jealous when they see my little one coming home to me on a bicycle like a gentleman ? "

" Huh ! " muttered Red Michael. " Gentleman ! Can a gentleman till the earth ? "

And he would rush out of the house.

The villagers were already jealous of the prosperity which " the child of God " had brought to the O'Toole family. They no longer despised Red Michael and they feared his wife. So they vented their spleen on little Peter, who had begun to toddle about. The other children threw mud at him and cried, " See-i, see-i, you came late from the womb, you are crabbed."

Little Peter, being delicate, was naturally inclined to be shy and morbid. The malice of the villagers made him still more gloomy. He had violent headaches and at night he had nightmares. But now and again he had fits of gaiety, during which he laughed boisterously, told his mother wonderful stories and played extraordinary pranks. His mother was delighted with these manifestations of abnormality, whereas they irritated the father. Often the village people saw the mother and son on a grassy knoll together ; the mother with her black hair loose, singing ; the son lying on his back at her feet.

Peter was sent to the village school. But for many years it was difficult to teach him anything. At school he proved to be

obstinate and prone to violent tempers. In fact he became " a regular young rake " as the schoolmaster said. And curiously enough, he grew strong and healthy during these years. So the other children, seeing he had become like themselves, stopped teasing him and made him their captain. Then, when Peter was ten years old, he underwent a marvellous change.

He came home from school one day and told his mother he wanted to be a bishop, and not " a clerk."

" Why little one ? " said his mother.

" I want to wear a cloak made of gold," said Peter, " and a pointed cap and carry a big golden stick. Lovely."

" Yes, but you'd have to be a priest first."

" Then, I'll be a priest."

" But you'll have to be good and pray hard and learn everything."

" All right, mother, I will."

" And it takes a lot of money to make a boy a priest."

" All right, mother," said Peter. " I'll kill Timoney the publican and I'll take all his money, same as a pirate, when I get big."

" Hush, hush," said his mother, " what things you say ! All right, Peter. Maybe I'll get the money for you."

Then Mrs. O'Toole's ambition swelled within her. Her son a priest ! It was the highest ambition of a peasant. She consulted her husband. He growled, but still . . . " there was no going against it. It was a big thing surely." The other children were consulted. They were enthusiastic about it. It would reflect credit on them. And they were especially struck by the fact that Peter had become pious, industrious and showed marvellous intelligence at school.

" There ye are," said his mother. " The breath of God has fallen on him. He's a child of God. Children, we must save every penny to make him a priest. If I have to break stones on the road and sell my mother's wedding ring I'll do it."

When he was twelve years old, Peter was sent to a small ecclesiastical seminary in the town. The faces of the villagers went green with jealousy.

For six years everything progressed favourably, until the unfortunate event, with which this story begins. Peter had a wonderful career at the seminary. His genius was the talk of the whole district. Year after year he came home laden with

prizes. His mother was in an ecstasy of happiness. " Before I die," she would say, " I'll confess my sins to my own son." Even Red Michael had become resigned to " the loss " of all his sons. He still mourned in his heart but he was gradually becoming impressed by his new social importance. He wore a swallow-tailed coat going to Mass on Sundays. He had his house slated and had a stove put into the kitchen instead of an open hearth. And the parish priest now called on him as a friend. At the same time, however, money grew scarce in the house. The savings were entirely spent after four years. The other children all got married. Michael married a woman who kept a small shop in Carra ; Joseph married the postmistress at Carra. Margaret married the police sergeant in the neighbouring village of Lisheen. Having families of their own, it was now difficult to get a penny from them. But the mother was so excited by the glorious future that she paid no heed to this. She borrowed money everywhere. The family fell into debt.

Then the disaster came like a thunderbolt. It was simply a letter from the president of the seminary announcing that Peter had been expelled. There were no explanations. The father and mother were both stupefied. For three days they were quite incapable of even making enquiries. No news came from Peter himself. Then at last Red Michael called in his children. There was an uproar in the house. The violence with which the married children hurled abuse at Peter was extraordinary. Then they turned on the old people. " Their money had been squandered. " Their " good name was dragged in the gutter. The " shame of it " would drive " them " out of the district. The mother was inarticulate and, strange to say, it was Red Michael who defended his son.

" Shut up," he cried, " and get out of my house. I'm glad he's expelled. What do I want with a priest ? I want a son to till my land and come after me. This place is his whenever he likes to come back for it."

" Not likely," cried Margaret, a stout woman of thirty. " You owe us money and the land will have to be divided among us. He'll never get a sod of it."

" Get out of my house," cried the old man.

Nothing happened for a year. The mother reverted to her old habits of staring at the sea and going about with her head in the air. Of course " the shame " leaked out even though the

36″ × 28″ (*oil*).

THE BUILDERS.

CECIL FFRENCH SALKELD.

family tried to keep it a secret. But nobody could learn the cause of the expulsion, even though the inquisitive parish priest made a special journey to the town in order to ferret out the secret. Peter had disappeared. The village people now pitied the O'Tooles and they treated them very kindly indeed, since they had no longer any cause of jealousy. The poor old couple were indeed in a lonely and miserable condition, trying to meet the overdue bills that came pouring in, as soon as their " shame " became known.

Then suddenly, after a year, Peter arrived home one evening. It was a night in April. The lamps had just been lit in the village. Everything was silent, except the sea that murmured softly in the distance, thudding mournfully against the bases of the cliffs. The soft, cool April night seemed to be listening to this distant thudding sound and the people sat in their cabins, listening, rocked peacefully by the sound of the sea.

Thus, when Peter suddenly lifted the latch and walked into the kitchen of his home. he found his parents sitting by the fireside in silence, brooding sorrowfully, as if they were listening to the murmur of the distant sea.

" Jesus, Mary and Joseph," his mother cried, staring at him.

The father did not speak, but he rose to his feet slowly. His queer old face assumed a ludicrous expression of joy. Then he wiped his gnarled hand on his trousers and held it out to his son.

Peter came forward with tears in his eyes. He shook hands with his father in silence. Father and son looked one another in the eyes for a moment, softly, tenderly. The father muttered something and then pointed with his eyes towards the mother. Immediately Peter threw himself on his knees at her feet. Sobbing they embraced wildly. She took his head in her hands and covered him with kisses. Then she touched his limbs with her hands, uttering little cries of joy. The father watched them trembling. He also wept. For a long time not a word was spoken and their sobbing was so gentle that, above it, the distant murmur of the sea could be heard.

At last they grew calm and a tense embarrassment followed the outburst of joy. Peter murmured something about his driver being outside on the road. He went out with his father and after a little while returned with a trunk. The mother had put the kettle on the stove. She laid the table in the kitchen

for tea. Yet it seemed they could talk of nothing but the weather. They spoke in snatches, but the old couple furtively examined Peter, and Peter in turn cast hasty and searching glances at the old couple.

A great change had come over the old people since Peter had seen them last. It seemed that decrepitude had swooped down upon them. The mother's hair was still dark and her strong sallow face had not wrinkled. But there was a wary look in her eyes and her gait was slow and uncertain. The father's hair had gone quite grey. All his teeth had gone and his cheeks had fallen in. Yet his body was still as hardy as ever. It seemed that the natural apathy of his mind had not been affected as much by the " shame " as the mind of his sensitive wife had been.

Peter had undergone an extraordinary change. Even though he was only nineteen he had matured. He was very thin, but there was resolution in his deep grey eyes and the pale skin of his cheeks was smooth and flawless. His voluptuous lips were firmly set. His fair hair was shorn closely. He wore a close fitting blue suit, rather smart, with a very light blue shirt and collar and a black bow tie. His body was symmetrically built and his limbs filled his clothes elegantly. Sitting with his elbows on his knees, he looked perfectly at ease, a dominant fellow, full of vitality. The old people were very nervous looking at him. They could hardly recognise him as their son, their brooding son who sometimes laughed boisterously, but who was like themselves. Whereas this MAN had some strange force in him, entirely alien to their natures.

At last Peter broke the silence, for it was a silence, since they merely uttered commonplaces, totally irrelevant to the questions that troubled their minds.

" I suppose you are wondering what happened," he said.

The mother was going to the table with a jug when he spoke. She halted suddenly and looked at him furtively. Then she hastily placed the jug on the table, wiped her hands in her apron and sat down in front of the fire. The father opened his lips and looked at her, terrified.

" Yes, we were wondering," said the mother. Then suddenly she burst into a flood of tears, silently and weeping silently she murmured brokenly : " But now you are back to us what does it matter ? Now everything is done and . . . "

" Yes," cried the father furiously, " what does it matter ? Now you are back. This place is yours. No man can raise a hand to you."

It is unexplainable. But the two of them felt in their minds that this strange being, who had been their son, was so utterly remote from them that they were terrified of hearing anything of his past. It is impossible to explain the instinct of peasants, their aversion for anything unlike themselves and their intuition for sensing the presence in strangers of forces which are alien to their own natures.

But Peter felt none of this. He looked at them in astonishment. Then something struck him in the chest suddenly. He felt an aching pain, not in his heart, but in his lungs, as if he were short of breath. His eyes opened wide. He saw the strange look of fear on the faces of his parents. Then he too became afraid, for extraordinary and shameful thoughts struggled into his mind. Had he not longed to come back ? Had he not longed for hours in distant, distant London, to see these beloved faces once more, to touch these toil-worn hands, to hear these voices, of which he knew every delicate intonation, to kiss those lips that murmured when he kissed them, maternal lips that crooned to him as a child ? Had his eyes not grown moist and his body loosened with a delicious agony of longing when he thought of them, his parents ? And now, when the joy of meeting had passed, the horror had come into his mind. He found himself looking at them with strange curiosity. He saw, for the first time, that their bodies were uncouth. Their faces had that ignorant fear in them, the ignorant fear of the animal looking at a strange thing. He was strange to them. Now they were strange to him. And around them, the kitchen and the furniture and the curious silent air and the distant murmuring of the sea was strange. It was not only strange. It was accusing. It was hostile to him. He must be aggressive. He must attack it, them, all of it. Why had he been drawn back ? To attack it, them, everything. His body grew rigid and in spite of himself, driven by a strange force, his forehead wrinkled, his eyes narrowed, his mind grew violent and words poured from his lips, almost unknown to him.

" Who would raise a hand to me ? " he cried arrogantly. " And why all this nonsense ? I'll tell you why I was expelled. Do you think I committed some crime ? Eh ? You are ashamed

of me. That's the truth. I was expelled because I don't believe in God and I refused to be a hypocrite."

The two of them uttered a cry and they looked at him. Now their faces were no longer ignorant with fear. Now everything had been made manifest to them. They knew why he was an outcast, why he was different to them. The bond between them had been broken. But still, a different sort of fear possessed them now. They were afraid of him, not as their son who had become strange to them, but as a dominant strange force that threatened them. But they hid that fear. They looked at one another sadly. Then the mother said irrelevantly :—

" Have a cup of tea, my treasure. I'm sure you're longing for one after your voyage."

" Thanks, mother," said Peter.

Again there was a period of embarrassment while they had tea. It had become a sad home-coming. They talked casually until bedtime, about the neighbours and all the local happenings. They even laughed together. But they only laughed with their lips. When Peter went to bed his mother came into his room as of old. She tucked him in, uttering blessings and prayers tenderly. Then suddenly she burst into tears, threw her arms around him, and they kissed and wept together, hugging one another fiercely, devouring one another with kisses, shedding salt tears ; as if making a savage effort to bridge this unexplainable gulf between them by the force of their natural love.

The next day was Sunday. Peter got up while his father was out milking the cow. In the morning Peter was very gay. One of his old fits of gaiety had possessed him. He pranced about the floor and made his mother waltz with him. He sang songs. He brought a chair out into the yard, put a basin of water on the chair, stripped to the waist and washed there. He shouted merrily to the village people that passed. It was a beautiful Spring morning. Larks were rising as thickly as butterflies, singing their wild triumphant melodies. The whole world was gay. The mother was thrilled with delight and for the moment, that old strange fear was smothered within her. For a moment she imagined that this gay boy was her little son who had come back again to her. Village people, seeing Peter had come back, crowded into the kitchen, welcoming him joyously, while he was having breakfast. They were all dressed in their best clothes, smelling of rough soap, ready to tramp to

the parish church at Carra for Mass. The father returned with the milk. Seeing his son's gaiety and the presence of the villagers and the joy that had come upon everybody with his son's return, he also felt exalted.

" He has come back to the land," he thought, " now everything will be the same as in my father's time. A son will follow me."

Peter finished breakfast. He rose from the table, struck himself a violent blow on the chest and then laughed loudly like a peasant.

" Oh ! " he said. " It's great to be back again among my own people."

" Well said, Peter," cried several.

Then suddenly an old woman, who sat on the floor on her haunches, put her apron to her eyes, rocked herself and sobbed.

" Oh ! indeed, indeed," she moaned, " well may you say it, Peter. The roots of the people are as deep as the roots of the earth. We are all of the same kindred and we all share our sorrows. And is it not a sorrow that you had to go wandering in far places after your good mother and your honest father had spent a deal of money to make you a priest? But now that you are back we welcome you, and may you till the earth as well as your father did."

" He will," said the people seriously. " He will."

Peter smiled looking at them curiously. He stood in the middle of the floor and they sat around the walls, strange, beautiful faces, all sombre and dignified ; mysterious faces of people who live by the sea away from civilisation ; age-old people, inarticulate, pitiless yet as gentle as children.

Then his mother spoke curtly.

" Indeed he will not till the earth," she said bitterly. " Do ye think my son is fit for nothing better than to be a slave to the land like his father ? I wanted to make him a clerk first, but he wanted other things. But now as . . . this other thing is not . . . God's will be done . . . there's many a big house in the town would be glad to get him as a clerk."

" What's this woman ? " cried Red Michael angrily.

" Don't worry father," cried Peter gaily. " I'll neither be a clerk nor till the earth. I'm an artist now."

" What ? " cried the mother.

The others gaped. Peter laughed again. A roguish gleam

came into his eyes. He rushed to his trunk which still remained by the dresser. He brusquely removed two young men who were sitting on it. He raised the lid. " See, see," he cried excitedly, as he tossed books on to the floor. " Look, look." There was a score of beautiful books and he fluttered the pages of some, showing marvellous pictures to their gaping eyes. Then brought out paints, brushes, canvas, drawings and all the materials of a painter. Lastly he brought out a portfolio and opened it feverishly.

" These are my own," he cried with blazing eyes, showing them drawings, one after the other rapidly. " Take that. Look at that."

Instead of being enthused, they were horrified. There were drawings in the nude and sketches of fierce, terrible men, everything done with a tremendous, almost uncouth power, the work of a raw, turbulent, half-developed genius ; but to them they were visions of the devil incarnate. Without a word they drifted out of the house. Peter took no notice of them. He merely laughed and tumbled the art books and materials back again into the trunk. The gaiety born of his " creative mania " made him impervious to everything.

" So that's what ye're at," whispered a voice, that was dry and almost inaudible with horror.

Peter turned around. It was his father who spoke. He saw his father looking at him, with the cunning ferocity and hatred of a wild animal. Still Peter did not flinch. They stared at one another for a few moments. Then the father took his hat and walked out of the house, on his way to Mass.

" Peter," whispered his mother weakly, " are you coming to Mass."

Peter went up to her and kissed her tenderly.

" Next Sunday I'll go, mother," he said. " Next Sunday."

Then she too took her shawl and went out sadly. Left alone in the kitchen, Peter stood motionless for a minute, his eyes blazing, his lips open. Then he cried.

" Yes. I knew I must come back. That scene. The red petticoats. All around the walls. The faces. My God ! What faces ! What power ! At once. At once, before I lose the impression."

He locked himself in his room and worked all day, sketching the picture of the scene in the kitchen.

That evening all the married children arrived. As relations between them and their parents had been broken for the year previous they came uninvited and obviously determined to cause trouble. Margaret especially was eager to be offensive. A large woman, with a coarse face and avaricious eyes, she flopped on to a chair without removing her enormous red hat. Michael was equally offensive, a large man like his sister, with heavy black eyebrows and little eyes peering from under them furtively, his father's eyes. Joseph, the carpenter, was more subtle, but as hostile as the rest. He had made a good match and he was now very prosperous. He had married a fat middle-aged woman, who had saved a considerable sum of money and he had his hand in all sorts of undertakings. He was silent, astute, and a polite man.

The three of them appeared at the same time. Peter was still in his room with the door locked. He was called out by his mother. He appeared laughing and taking no notice of the hostile glances directed at him, he shook hands with them all, laughing boisterously.

" Well," he cried, " it's nice of you to welcome me home."

There was silence. The three of them looked at one another. Then Margaret spoke.

" Since we," she cried haughtily, " paid for you at college, we'd like to know when you intend to pay us back. When are you going to work, or are you going to make a disgrace of us again with your jig acting."

" What do you mean ? " said Peter flushing angrily.

" Don't speak like that to me," cried Margaret brutally. " I heard of what you showed the people this morning. Is it true or isn't it that you have naked women in yer trunk like French postcards, coming back here with yer London smut ? What were ye doin' in London I'd like to know. Why didn't ye go to Mass to-day ? An' why did ye come back here after bringin' shame an' disgrace on us ? "

She would have said much more but Peter's face became so terrible that she stopped, afraid in spite of her arrogance. They all watched him terrified. Then he controlled himself and spoke in a calm voice.

" I forgive you, Margaret," he said, " you don't understand. I'm ambitious, just as you are avaricious and mean, just as the

rest of you, so I can't blame you for being like myself, only on a lower plane."

" We don't want to listen to your big talk," snapped Margaret, encouraged once more by his gentleness.

" Shut up," he cried, at last losing control of himself. " I'll tell you what I'm going to do. You'll get your money back, you, all of you, thousands instead of the miserable pounds you paid to educate me. I don't want money. You can have it. All of it. All."

" Where is it ? " said Margaret.

" Here," he cried tapping his forehead.

They glanced curiously at one another, thinking him insane. Red Michael gaped. The mother wiped her eyes with her apron.

" Yes, it's here," he continued, tapping his forehead again. " I only want time. In five years, father, I'll make your name famous all over the world. I'll make thousands, thousands. Only give me time. Work ? I'll work the skin off my back. Listen. I've been working for a year in London. I worked as a labourer, as a waiter, as a porter, I can't remember all I worked at, just to get bread and money to pay for lessons and books, to learn my art. That's why I left college, because I wanted to become an artist. Brother Shwartz there, he was a painter. He did something and became a monk. He taught me. He was teaching me for three years on the sly. He taught me to draw, gave me books. He went away. Got fed up and went back to Berlin. Then I told the old president I didn't believe in God and they expelled me. I wanted to become an artist. And look here. Just leave me alone. I want to stay here for a few months and work. A painter in London who liked my work told me to come back and express the . . . you wouldn't understand that. But just you leave me alone and you'll get your money. I don't want money. You can have it. Just let me alone."

He made a gesture with his hands and dashed back to his room, locking the door after him. The mother burst into tears. Margaret got to her feet.

" Come on, brothers," she said, " there's a curse on this house."

They all left. But Joseph came back again and gave his mother a five pound note.

" There may be something in what he says," he muttered.

" It would be best to leave him alone and get him anything he needs. Who knows ? "

" God reward you, son," said the mother, " I hadn't a grain of flour in the house."

After that Peter was left alone. But things became lively in the district. Peter cast aside his London clothes and dressed like a fisherman, in raw hide shoes, blue frieze trousers, multi-coloured, woven belt, blue woollen smock and a flat, black, soft felt hat. Between periods of ferocious creative energy he went out fishing and roamed around the district, carousing wildly with the young men and, it was rumoured, making love to the young women. A spirit of turbulent unrest entered the district after his arrival. At first the people loved him for his gaiety, his wildness, and for the fact that he, an educated man, was so familiar with them. But gradually they began to fear him. At first it was the old people who feared him. Then the young people began to fear him. Especially as he was in the habit of drawing sketches of them at the most unusual times, perhaps in the middle of a drinking bout. At home his parents grew more and more hostile, until finally they kept pestering him to leave the place.

However, for six months nobody took any definite action against him. Even the parish priest did not denounce him from the altar, although, indeed, he was very active going round among the people inciting them against Peter.

Then at last the hatred of the people burst forth violently owing to a scandalous orgy that was perpetrated in the village, " in broad daylight, under their very noses."

A very old man died. For many years he had been a butt for the gross humour of the young men of the village. They gathered in his cabin every evening, playing cards, telling stories and insulting the decrepit old man in a disgusting fashion. The old man had one son, who, instead of defending his father, took a leading part in this scandalous conduct. Thus, when the old man died, nobody came to the wake but the band of young men, who had formed a sort of rowdy club since Peter's return. An old woman was at first brought in to wash the body and lay it on a deal table in the kitchen. When that was done she went away and no other woman came to participate in the wake. Then a debauch started.

A young man from a neighbouring village, who had recently

returned from America, bought two barrels of porter for the debauch. The old man's son made a sort of bargain with the fellow, promising to repay him with the price of his two young pigs, which he guaranteed to sell the following week. Eight of them, including Peter, began to drink the porter.

The debauch lasted for two days. In the meantime a botch carpenter had been brought from Lisheen to make the coffin ; but on the second day, at noon, when the coffin was completed, the fellows made the carpenter blind drunk and put him lying in the coffin in the middle of the kitchen floor. The sight was so ludicrous that they were all carried away into an ecstasy of drunkenness. Within an hour they were all lying stupefied on the floor ; paralysed with drink. It was a dreadful scene. The village children gathered around the door and some women crept up, talking excitedly and saying that something should be done. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

Then Peter was seen coming along hurriedly from his house with a satchel under his arm. They all looked at him in amazement, because they thought he was in the cabin with the others. But a small boy whispered that he had seen somebody steal out by the back door a short time ago. And it was also very strange that after two days' carousing Peter looked quite sober.

With amazement they watched him take a stool in the doorway and begin to sketch the horrible scene within, the corpse, the carpenter lying drunk in the coffin, the stupefied men lying on the floor in gruesome attitudes, the dark kitchen, with sagging, black earthen roof and the silence of death.

They watched him for almost an hour in silence. They were too amazed to speak or to interfere. He worked feverishly, muttering as he worked. The crowd grew rapidly until at last it seemed the whole village had collected, all peering over one another's shoulders to catch a glimpse of the drawing. Even his mother came, but she did not stay. She burst into tears and returned, running to her house, waving her hands.

Then at last he ceased working and jumped up. He put the drawings, he had made several, into his sketch book and cried to the crowd : " Make way there." They fell back and he rushed through them. No one spoke. No one stopped him until he had got clear away.

But then they began to murmur savagely. Then they burst into a frenzied passion suddenly. " Sacrilege, sacrilege," they

cried. " Stone him," others cried. " Out with him. Kill him."

They set off towards Red Michael's house at a rush, picking up stones as they went and yelling wildly.

In the meantime Peter had arrived home. The old couple were quarrelling loudly when he entered. When they saw him they both turned on him. There was horror in their faces.

" Get out of my house," cried the old man.

" Don't worry, father," said Peter calmly, " I'm going. I've got a masterpiece. Look."

He opened the satchel and took out the drawings he had done. They looked and then they both gasped with horror.

" Lord God have mercy upon us," they cried together.

Then Peter, realising their horror was himself stricken with fear. He closed the satchel hurriedly and threw himself at his mother's feet.

" Mother, mother," he whispered, " don't look at me like that. Speak kindly to me, mother. Mother, I love you. Forgive me."

" Oh ! My darling, my darling," she wailed, " there is a curse on you and on me that brought you forth."

" Begone, begone," shrieked the old man, " before God strikes us all dead. Listen. Whisht. Great God ! "

It was the people whom he heard coming. Peter jumped to his feet. He saw the maddened people. Then he rushed at the door and bolted it. Almost immediately a shower of stones struck the house. They burst through the windows and pattered on the slates of the roof, while above the sound of their crashing the yells of the people could be heard, drawing closer and urging one another on. The family threw themselves to the floor. The mother began to pray aloud.

That lasted for a quarter of an hour. The people were already battering down the door when suddenly a strange silence fell over them. Then loud whispers were heard : " It's the priest. The priest has come." They all fled in confusion. Red Michael timorously opened the door. He saw the priest driving away the last of the people with a big stick. He rushed up to the priest, fell on his knees and embraced the priest's legs. The priest looked at him angrily.

" Get up," he cried, " your son has brought a curse on my parish. I give him till night to leave here, NEVER to come back."

Then he added in a sad voice : " And may God forgive you, Red Michael, for being his father."

And so it happened. Within an hour Red Michael had straddled his pony. Peter's trunk was hoisted up and tied with ropes. Father and son set out to the village of Lisheen, six miles away over the mountains, where Peter could catch the night mail cart to the county town. The mother fainted when Peter had left, even though she embraced him coldly when he kissed her goodbye.

Then after lying an hour on the floor where she had fallen she recovered consciousness. Not a soul had come in to succour her. There was dead silence in the village. Dusk was approaching. The murmur of the sea was distinct. She looked about her at the wrecked windows, at the battered door, at the stones that were still on the floor. She shuddered and she rose to her feet. She staggered wearily. Her eyes seemed to be covered with a mist. She rubbed them, but still the mist remained, like a gauze, making everything blurred. Then, suddenly, the gauze cracked. Her eyes opened wide, and everything became distinct. The whole load of her sorrow fell on her mind in a flash. She rushed to the door and looked out, out along the mountain road by which he had gone. No one, not a speck. Nothing.

Dusk was falling. Night was falling like a shroud of peace over the heated earth, to pour fresh sap and vigour into the powers of nature, refreshing dew and sleep. But for her there was no night. For ever and for ever she would long in vain for the little one whose naked baby toes she had fondled, to whom she crooned, whose wondering eyes had looked into hers, with the first wondering infant love for the mother at whose breast it fed. For ever and for ever, even through eternity, where damned souls cry out in anguish, he would be lost to her. Lost for ever.

Throwing back her head and raising aloft her hands, she shrieked :—

" My curse ! My curse on . . . "

Suddenly she dropped her hands. Tears flowed from her eyes and her lips moved in prayer.

T. F. POWYS.

WHAT LACK I YET?

JAMES PINNOCK looked out from the low doorway of the holding upon Tadnol Heath, that was now all his own. Before him was a little hill, covered with heather, but also showing patches of white sand. Under the hill a lame cow was lying down, and a little to the right hand, there was a three-acre field, which during all the working hours—from the time James was fourteen till this day when he was thirty—he had tilled with his own hands.

James turned from the door and entered the cottage. Upon the shaky table in the one downstairs room there was an empty bottle of spirits and six wine glasses. The number of glasses was significant. His mother, whom he had buried the day before, was a heavy woman, and James had been forced to hire six bearers. James sat beside the table. He looked at the glasses and thought about his mother. A certain smell told him that she hadn't been long gone.

James had rather liked the journey to the churchyard, for, as long as he could remember, his mother had never grown tired of scolding him. She scolded him even when his father fell from a hay-wagon and broke his neck.

"You want so much," she would say. "You are always wanting to improve the farm and to do better in life than your poor mother."

Whenever James tried to lay aside any money to buy a cow in milk or a few little pigs, his mother had been sure to discover the hoard and take it to the town and buy what was of no use to anyone. But on the way there she would always tell Mrs. Barber, the rich widow of Applecoombe Farm what a kind son she had and how hard he worked, "and he takes no interest in the maidens—no interest at all." Jane Barber would listen attentively to all she said.

When Mrs. Pinnock didn't go to the town she would spend all the morning in talking to the people in the village, and then come home very cross indeed to scold James.

After the funeral James said to Mr. Hayball, the minister :—

" It's nice to know where Mother is, because often I have had to hunt in half the houses in Tadnol to find her, but now that I know where she is I feel more contented."

The funeral was upon a Sunday and took place before the afternoon service. After watching the sexton fill in the grave, and observing to himself that though his mother had always been a gadder she had come to a place of rest at last, James had happened to pass the church door when Mr. Hayball read the verse that was to be his text : " The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up : What lack I yet ? "

When James had ever mentioned a young woman to his mother she used to say :—

" If thee do bring one of they little cats home I'll spoil she's face." And James would go into the field to work and forget the girls.

Though his mother's corpse still seemed to linger in an unpleasant manner about the cottage, James knew, as he had told the clergyman, where she was now. He also knew that he was free, and he supposed he could answer the question put by the text he had overheard. He knew what he lacked.

James Pinnock left the cottage. He climbed the little hill under which the lame cow was lying and looked at Applecoombe Farm. This farm, where Mrs. Barber lived, was a short way removed from the barren heath. Applecoombe Farm was approached from the main road by an avenue of large trees—the leaves upon them in late Autumn shone like golden guineas. All was good ground here—fair cornfields, green downs and rich pasture. Near to the farm there was a large orchard of apple-trees.

James knew that he lacked this fair orchard, from whence near a hundred bushels of good apples could be gathered yearly. He also knew that he lacked the corn, the cattle, the sheep, that were Jane Barber's.

From where he stood the contrast between his own holding and Mrs. Barber's appeared strikingly enough. James was strong as a lion. He was handsome, too, in a rough way. He felt a power in him that would overcome any woman. He knew animals and he believed he knew women. He had seen his own lame cow—a poor sad beast, hardly fit to bear—become young

and sprightly when the bull roared. He intended to act the bull to Jane Barber, who was withered and elderly, too, though she was not lame like the cow.

James Pinnock went to the cow and kicked its flank.

" Though thee baint wanting, 'tis best I drive 'ee to Jane Barber's bull," he said.

James went on kicking the cow till it rose up. He picked up a piece of furze and began to drive the cow along the heath road that led to Applecoombe Farm. The cow plodded wearily, and whenever it stopped to rest its bad leg, James beat it on.

When he drove the cow into Mrs. Barber's great yard, the cowman told him that the bull was in a distant field and that he had better leave the cow there, " Though 'taint nor bull she do want," the cowman added knowingly.

James Pinnock went to find Mrs. Barber, to tell her that he had brought his cow.

Jane Barber was in the orchard, watching the trees being whitewashed and pruned so that they might bear the better crop the next season. The winter sun shone and the grass under the trees was a rich carpet of green. Jane Barber was standing under one of the trees and looked, herself, like the gnarled trunk of one. She turned in a friendly manner to James Pinnock, who eyed her as a strong man will who means to have his own way with a woman . . .

Within a month after his mother's death, James Pinnock was married to Mrs. Barber. At the vestry door, when he shook hands with Mr. Hayball, James said, " I don't mind leaving my mother now for I know where she is." Mr. Hayball wished him joy.

The wedding over, James Pinnock looked into his wife's affairs. He found that the farm was not hers as he had supposed and that even the stock was mortgaged. James Pinnock knew what he lacked—he set himself to free the farm from debt.

He commenced a stern battle, both with nature and with his labourers and was called a harsh and mean master by the men. Slowly, though with years needed for the working out of his plans, every venture that James Pinnock tried bore good fruit. He cleared the land of weeds, employing his own hands as well as his labourers for this purpose. He improved and increased the flock of sheep, reared the best of his calves, so that after ten

years at Applecoombe Farm, he possessed the finest herd of dairy cows in the county.

James Pinnock fought for the farm and won. His wife, Jane, had never been anything to him but a gnarled tree, but he didn't mind what she looked like so long as she kept the maids busy and saw to the house and the dairy.

Of all the crops that James Pinnock tended so carefully the apple harvest received the most of his attention. It was in the orchard that Jane Barber had accepted him, and so he had come to believe that the orchard was the place to make or mar him. He would always go there upon a Sunday afternoon in the summer time, lie down under the cool shade of his favourite tree—a Beauty of Bath—and mature his plans for the betterment of the farm.

James Pinnock had been at Applecoombe Farm for fifteen years before his ambition was satisfied and he was able to ask himself the question again : " What lack I yet ? "

The farm now belonged to his wife and over and above the purchase price there were two thousand pounds upon deposit at the bank. But James Pinnock became more than ever hard and close in his dealings with other men, and though he had begun to ask that question again he lived according to the habits he had formed. His workmen both hated and feared him, and those who could always left him to take another place.

The great hiring fair was held at Maidenbridge upon the 14th of February, and James Pinnock decided to attend it. He had business to do there, stock to sell, the deeds of Applecoombe Farm to lodge at the bank and a new cowman to hire.

After attending to the more important of his affairs, James went into the market place to hire the man he needed. There was the usual crowd of workmen, some of one trade and some of another, and James Pinnock picked out John Petch from a score of applicants. John Petch was the most shabby of them all, but he did not look the kind of man to turn against his master.

" Can 'ee work ? " asked James.

Mr. Petch, to show what he could do, ran round the market place calling as if he were fetching up the cows.

" That will do," said James Pinnock. " And I suppose your family is well-behaved, but if I catch one of your boys in my orchard I will beat him to death."

Mr. Petch smiled.

CAMOUFLAGED GRENADIER.
By Stanley Spencer.

" I be only a father to maidens, and me wife be dead," he said. Mr. Petch smiled again . . .

During the early spring and summer James Pinnock spent his time in improving, as a last task, the environment of the farmhouse. He planted a grove of evergreen trees, and purchased some iron railings to put round the home meadow where his bull and rams used to feed. He built a new brick wall around the kitchen garden. He drew gravel from the gravel-pits upon the heath and made the drive as smooth as a garden path.

There was nothing ragged at Applecoombe now except Mr. Petch, and it was a wonder that Mr. Petch's clothes held together at all, for even a gust of wind or an unlucky nail would tear them.

The time of haymaking passed and the time of harvest, but, as it often happens, the early days in October were hotter than any of the summer hours.

Upon the first Sunday in October, James Pinnock, though he didn't know why, had a wish to look at his old home that he had left to the mercy of thistle and couch grass when he moved to Applecoombe. He walked down the drive between the trees that were beginning to turn a golden colour, crunching the new gravel. He crossed the main road and took the same path that he had driven his cow along. James climbed the little hill upon the heath, from where he could view not only the grandeur of Applecoombe but the poor barren holding that he had forsaken when his mother died. Although he had never cared what became of it, the cottage was still his, but the roof was so rotten and worn that the rain came through the thatch and ran down the walls. The field, too, was now only rank grass. The fence was fallen.

James Pinnock turned and looked at Applecoombe Farm. He had lacked that once, but now it was his, and as fine a property as any man need wish to own.

A snake moved in the heather.

" What lack I yet ? " said James Pinnock, aloud.

He began to descend the hill and met Mr. Petch, who was climbing up to him.

" What's the matter at home ? What did you follow me here for ? " James asked fiercely.

" They children," said Mr. Petch, " they bad maids 'ave broke into thee's orchard."

James Pinnock strode past Mr. Petch, waving his stick.

" 'Tis Eva, the big maid," called out Mr. Petch. " 'Tis she—a grown maid—that thee should hit."

Mr. Pinnock wished to catch the thieves suddenly. He remembered that his wife had told him that Petch had insisted on keeping his eldest daughter Eva, who was seventeen years old, at home with him instead of allowing her to work at the farm or go elsewhere to service. And once or twice Eva, a pretty, well-grown girl with red cheeks and redder lips, had opened the drive gate for James Pinnock, but he had not regarded her.

Only the day before the farmer had decided that the apple picking should begin as soon as the aftermath of the clover field was gathered in. The clover would be carried, if the weather remained fine, on the Monday, and on the next day after that he hoped to gather the apples. But now Petch's girls were in his orchard, stealing.

James Pinnock crept along under a bank that hid him from view. He wished to reach, unseen, a place in the orchard hedge that he had more than once thought had been broken down by someone. As he slunk along under the bank in the hot still sunshine, grasping his stick tightly, he knew that he had nothing now to look forward to. He was sullen and wrathful, but he couldn't name what he lacked.

But whatever it was that he lacked appeared to fill him with a dull rage, coming out of the bottom of his being as a dark force that rent and tore him. Those thieves, those robbers of his beautiful apples, for James knew well enough that it was from his favourite tree that Eva Petch was stealing the fruit, he would catch them now. His strength, his whole body, as he crept along, was crying out for something that he lacked. His passion grew as he neared the orchard. There the apples that he had guarded so jealously were being taken from him! No matter if there were an hundred bushels left, those few taken were worth to him now more than them all.

" Ha! " he thought, savagely, " my wife, that gnarled tree of a woman, sees to it that nothing is stolen in the house, but now at this very moment my choicest fruit is being bitten by a girl's sharp teeth."

He remembered having seen Mr. Petch's two little girls, Bessy and Mary, picking cowslips in his home meadow and

trampling down the grass. The next day he had ordered Mr. Petch to drive the bull into that field and Mr. Petch had done so, smiling.

James Pinnock crept along the orchard hedge to find the gap. The last summer heats burnt under the hedge, the orchard bank simmered. Peacock butterflies rested on the warmed flowers and the scent of ground ivy filled the hot air.

James Pinnock reached the gap and cautiously peeped through. He heard the laughter of children and saw Eva Petch, who had climbed to a high bough of his favourite tree, handing down the largest apples she could reach to her sisters.

James Pinnock held his stick tight. He jumped through the hedge and came to the tree. The two small girls ran away, screaming. Mr. Pinnock looked up at Eva. He had caught one of them. Eva's hair was ruffled—she wore no hat—her thin summer frock showed rather than hid her body, while her breast panted, as her heart did, with fear.

Mr. Pinnock had never had his orchard robbed so shamelessly. He bid Eva come down. She obeyed, expecting that he would let her run off like the others.

As soon as her feet touched the soft grass, James threw her brutally down and began to beat her. Eva tossed about, trying to shield her body with her hands, from his strokes. Her frock was soon torn, her breast laid bare, but James Pinnock still beat her.

Suddenly he threw away his stick. Eva stopped crying and even smiled at him. James Pinnock gazed at her. He knew now what he lacked. He seized her ferociously and pulled her to him. Eva was too pleased that the beating was over to resist his will, and as soon as he released her again, she smiled. She smiled because Mr. Pinnock hadn't taken away an apple that she still held in her hand. James Pinnock lifted Eva from the grass ; he held her close to him. Someone was standing near and watching them. This was Mr. Petch . . .

James Pinnock didn't return to the farm. He led Eva, who carried a little bundle of clothes, to his old home upon the heath. When she was there Eva hurried here and there, moving the furniture that had never been sold and setting things to rights. James Pinnock gazed at her. He believed he would never more have reason to say, " What lack I yet ? " He couldn't take his eyes off her, and when she put the apple she had stolen upon her

own plate to eat at supper, he took her into his arms and kissed her madly. He carried her to bed in his arms, and when she laughed at him his passion was so fierce that he tore off her clothes.

The next day the weather changed. There had been thunder in the night and all the morning a steady gloomy rain fell. Eva went to visit her father in order to bring back the news from Applecoombe Farm. She left James Pinnock alone in the cottage. As soon as she returned she began to talk quickly as a child will when it has much to say.

" What do you think have happened ? " she said. " Why, the bull that we all do call ' Dragon ' be broken out—'e be run into orchard—and only Mrs. Barber were able to drive 'en out. But that baint all the news, for Mrs. Barber do say that thee baint to go home no more."

James Pinnock drew Eva to him.

" Your clothes are wet through," he said.

" Then we best bide in bed," she replied and laughed.

The next day Eva went to the shop and got wet again. A cold north wind was blowing and she was chilled as well as soaked. James Pinnock endeavoured to warm her body with his embraces, but she tossed about all that night and talked wildly in her sleep. By the morning she was in a high fever. In three days Eva was dead.

James Pinnock was stupefied. He was dumb with anguish. He took a last kiss before her face was hidden by the coffin lid, and looked up to see Mr. Petch smiling. In the churchyard after the funeral was over, Mrs. Barber—as she was always called—waited for her husband.

" None of them can manage the bull," she said pleadingiy, " an' I believe that Petch creeps into the granary at night and steals the maize for his hens. One always wants a strong man upon the place to keep things in order."

James Pinnock did not answer his wife. He turned again to the grave and watched the sexton shovelling the earth. An old crazed woman, whose teeth chattered with the cold muttered that she had forgotten to buy any rice at the shop to fling at the bride.

James Pinnock looked into the grave. A large lump of chalk clattered into the hole. A gust of wind brought down a few

yellow leaves from a tree that stood next to the churchyard wall. The leaves sank gently into the grave.

James Pinnock remembered Mr. Hayball's text. Looking into Eva's grave he asked the question, " What lack I yet ? "

Mrs. Barber took him by the arm and led him to Applecoombe Farm. On the way she told him that she was sure if he went out in the middle of the night that he would catch Petch stealing the maize. James Pinnock did not heed what she said, but Mrs. Barber went on talking all the same. She said that one of the plough horses was lame and needed some attention from the master, and also that some new hurdles were wanted before the sheep could be penned upon the early turnips. But it wasn't new hurdles that James Pinnock lacked.

He lay beside Mrs. Barber that night and stared at the ceiling. One thing alone pleased him in his thoughts. He knew where Eva was. James Pinnock sat up in bed and looked at his wife. She was lying straight out. Her thin, spare body looked gaunt and stiff. Her face, even with her eyes shut, was harsh and mean.

James Pinnock left the bed and dressed himself silently. He went out of the house. There under a full moon all his new improvements met his eye. The Autumn night was very still. There was a frost, but a slight sound came—the shutting of the granary door. Upon the granary steps James Pinnock saw Mr. Petch who was descending them with a bag of maize-corn in his hand. Meeting his master in the yard, Mr. Petch forgot to smile.

James Pinnock went into the stable and found a rope. The lame horse was standing upon three legs and resting the other.

James Pinnock walked to the orchard. He found the gap that hadn't been repaired. The moon shone upon his favourite tree that was now bare of fruit. James knelt upon the grass where he had beaten and outraged Eva. He raised up his hands, but no one pitied him. He begged Eva's forgiveness for what he had done. When he arose he knew that it wasn't Eva that he lacked, but something else.

James Pinnock fastened the rope upon the bough that Eva had climbed. He knotted a noose that he slipped over his head and let himself drop.

PAUL SELVER.

TWO POEMS.

I.—EARTH SPEAKS.

MY children, seek to leave me some bequest,
As paltry links in an unending chain :
Some token of your sojourn on my breast,
Some earnest that my birth-pangs were not vain.

I, patient mother of my wayward sons,
Eternal victim of my offspring's broil,
Lament to see what paths their craving runs,
The gloomy caverns where they track their spoil.

These cunning fashioners of traps and gins,
Eager to maim and plunder and ensnare,
What profits me this fevered bout of sins ?
What profits me the puny fruit they bear ?

I see them send their bondslaves to defy
The jeopardies wherewith my strongholds teem,
And while their minions delve and sweat and die,
They batten on the loot of lode and seam.

Know then, I do not love this wizened breed,
These gloaters over ingot, ore and gem ;
Who wreck my temples in their wanton greed,
And fondly deem that I shall cherish them.

Their carven obelisks of bronze and stone
Requite me not for all my lavished dowers.
I do but crave scant bounty for my own,
Some meek avowal of my ageless powers.

Those do I love, who fashion in my praise
Tribute of ears that heard, of eyes that saw,
For men to muse on in the after-days,
And learn that I can kindle pride and awe.

II.—BEHOLD THE PORTENTS . . .

BEHOLD the portents of a great eclipse,
  Hark to the stir of swiftly mustering throngs;
Upon the scroll of earth's apocalypse
  Are traced the opening words of battle-songs.

Sentence is passed upon the ancient gods,
  Ever more tawdry wax their robes of state,
And all their brutish hordes of firing-squads,
  And all the foul devices of their hate,—

The frenzied ranting of their hireling scribes,
  Threats of duress and gibbets that they wield,
The venom of their taunts, their perjured gibes,
  Shall not avail them, for their doom is sealed.

Their doom is sealed, and those they scourge and slay
  Are envoys bearing destiny's decree,
The tokens of its dawning judgment-day,
  Which shall not wane till earth is cleansed and free.

A. S. J. TESSIMOND.

TWENTIETH CENTURY HYMN.

SPEED and more speed, my craven-hearted brothers—
Faster, tread close upon each other's heels!
Faster, strive each one to outstrip the others!
Vertigo lulls, the brain exhausted reels.

Faster, draw mortgage on futurity!
To-day's a dolt and yesterday a thief—
Faster!—Not happiness, that cannot be,—
But speed too great for time to think of grief!

And faster! The electric current flashes;
And thought's keen lightning breaks the heavenly dome:
The jockey of the gods is drunk, and lashes
Pegasus until his mouth drips foam

Oi—ahoi!—until every sound is drowned
By the wind's whir about the ears—ah—aie!
(Whet the mad course, whip on the eternal round;
Faster, my brothers.) One day we shall die—

Not yet, not yet! An epoch in a year,
Life in a day; Man the iconoclast!
The end will come ere we have time to fear.
Onward: the sun climbs fast, but we more fast!

WINTER LANDSCAPE.

FROM the vague, pallid sky the muffled sun
Shines weakly but benevolently down ;
Spreads a faint lustre on the muddy roads—
A patina of ineffectual gold ;
Glints through the railings, dappling the grey pavements
With palely gilded bars ; sheds a thin radiance
Upon a hundred serried roofs extended
Like docile hands lifted in hopeless prayer
For some slight warmth ; and finds a wan reflection
In countless windows like the vacant eyes
Of suppliants dulled with waiting. . . . Here and there
A frail, irrelevant tree extends the feathers
Of delicate branches on a crippled limb.
While the blue mist with kindly veil expunges
The jagged miscellany of backyards,
And turns their farthest corners into caverns
Of purple haze, down-like and soft as grape-bloom.

ROMANTIC.

ENFURL the sun in tatters, smoky-red
And black ; and in a torn, imperial shroud
Let the sun die as my love dies !
And set a fiery cloud
As background for her unforgiving eyes :
Spill the full winecup of the skies
As mine is spilt ! with hell-fire aureole her proud
Head, unlike mine, unbowed !

WAITING.

SHE sat stiff and rigid, counting their shoes as they Charlestoned past, hoping no one would notice she wasn't dancing. Miss Drone was old, very old—fifty-five and painted. The powder was dabbled on indiscriminately, uneven, caked. Her sight was very weak, so the rouge had slipped up from her lips on to the tip of her nose. She stayed every year in the Grand Hotel, Deauville—waiting. For the past thirty years she had come regularly every season. The manager approved of her as a kind of Tussaud figure, a sight to be seen by tourists. He mentioned her along with the advantages of steam heating to prospective clients. He had a tacit agreement with her always to give her a room next to something likely, an impecunious French artist who needed assistance, an unsuccessful actor who needed help, or an Italian count. Miss Drone rather favoured Italian counts. Some years she stipulated it was to be one. For she had once read in the *Sunday Express* that Italian counts were a terrible race, reckless, passionate, anything might happen when they got you in their clutches. But she had never managed to speak to any of the Italian counts in the next room. Last year she had managed to have a violent fit of coughing. She had banged on the wall and screamed for water. The Italian had discreetly put a glass through the door. He hadn't come in. It was such a pity he hadn't come in. It would have been so exciting if he had, even for a few minutes. Nothing had happened. Miss Drone had never had a man in her room. Her whole life long nothing had ever happened to Miss Drone.

Her father died when she was very young. She had been brought up very strictly by her mother. They lived alone.

Mrs. Drone had never recovered from a slip of her younger sister, who had eloped with a Russian dancer. She felt the family name would never recover from that tarnish. The other sex was never mentioned by her mother or the numerous trail of anæmic governesses who instilled into her the elements of Latin grammar.

The governesses came, got more anæmic and became crosser as they got weaker. Then peacefully died.

The governesses went on periodically dying. The only exciting event in Dora Drone's life was the arrival of a new governess. So she felt rather cheerful when she noticed the last one showing signs of weakness and decay. Dora never knew any other little girls. Mrs. Drone was so afraid they might have brothers.

When Dora was about sixteen and began asking questions, Mrs. Drone almost burst into tears. It was too bad of her only daughter to be so cruel, to try and torment her poor mother.

When she was nineteen, Dora began to feel everything was going wrong. She began to feel that unless something unusual happened soon she would go mad. Fortunately religion saved her from lunacy. Dora became a religious fanatic. She read religious books all day long. The Almighty must be very clever and strong and brave. She wished she knew Him. Still she knew exactly what he looked like. He was very large and handsome. He wore a long black cloak and a large hat. Dora always insisted on wearing black now. She dressed to match the Almighty. Mrs. Drone thought it was very funny of Dora to like black so much. But it was nice and neat, and saved washing.

Her religious mania only lasted until she was twenty-five. Her eyesight was getting very weak. She couldn't see what she read any more, and she had never been fond of going to church. She was jealous of the parson. He tried to get between her and the Almighty. She resented the way in which he assumed he knew the Almighty so much better than she did.

At twenty-five Dora took up social work in the slums. She tried to help the Salvation Army rescue girls from the paths of evil. It was very tiring. The girls were so very unappreciative. Didn't seem to enjoy being saved. When she was thirty her mother died. In order to recover from the trials of the funeral she went to Deauville for the first time. Ever since she had gone regularly every year. She spent the winter at home in the country preparing her clothes for the next season.

Unfortunately, owing to the weakness of her sight, she had mistaken a fashion magazine of 1906 for one of 1926. She arrived in Deauville in a pale pink high-waisted satin dress with a wide sweeping skirt which rustled as she walked along the ground. There was a lot of lace and odd roses sewn on here and

there to add chic. She had a large pink hat which clashed rather violently with her dress. It was perched high up on the top of masses of hair. When she walked it swayed from side to side, for the hatpins with which she tied it on were always falling out, and her veil was always coming undone. The ostrich feather which was sewn on to the side was also always coming loose, and when she walked up and down the parade, it got into the eyes of the passers-by.

Miss Drone sat in the ballroom, counting the shoes of the dancers. The shoes were very varied. It was fancy dress. She had to count them, because it gave her something to do—somewhere to look. If she didn't do anything they might notice she wasn't dancing; hadn't danced all evening. Those horrid French girls opposite might think she was waiting for someone to ask her to dance. A nice tall man with dark hair was coming into the room. Oh yes, she remembered she had seen him at breakfast. He was staying alone in the hotel. Oh dear, was that tiresome fluffy little girl his partner? What a horrid blue dress she had on. At least it might be blue. One couldn't tell. Her eyes were very weak. It was getting very hard to see anything.

Really it was stupid of people to come with partners. Very stupid and unenterprising.

He was coming over. Someone was coming over in her direction. He was going to—. No he was asking that horrid creature next to her to dance. That terrible girl with her face so disgustingly rouged. One could easily see what kind of a creature she was, wearing these terrible immoral short skirts with those horrid earrings. It was quite obvious that the woman was—well just—. One did not speak about such things, but with women of that kind they went on. Miss Drone wasn't quite sure what went on—but it was very disgusting. It was disgraceful the way the girl made eyes at strange men she didn't know.

Miss Drone began to blow her nose quietly, unobtrusively. One had to do something with one's hands. Her nose was getting sore. She must think of something else to do.

"Excuse me." Someone was actually going to—. "Excuse me." She looked up. He was standing over, very tall. It was a nice voice, a little affected, but pleasant. She rose. They were playing a waltz. Perhaps on the whole it would be easier

to waltz than to Charleston. She didn't hear what he was saying. She was so excited. But she answered " Yes."

" Oh, I say that's awfully good of you if you'll look after my sister for the evening ; pretend you're her chaperone. You see, I promised mother I'd get someone to chaperone her. I'm afraid it's awfully rude of me to ask you, but— "

Miss Drone sat down again. " Certainly," she said weakly. " Certainly."

The sister did not sit long beside Miss Drone. Someone soon came and asked her to dance. Miss Drone was sorry. It would have been so much easier if she'd stayed. She could at least have seemed to be talking to her.

He was coming over, the fair-haired one in the sailor suit. He didn't walk very steadily. He was rather lively, perhaps a little drunk. But it really didn't matter. He was sitting beside her taking hold of her hand to steady himself. " I wonder," he was saying unsteadily, " whether you would help me up to my room ? I'm so afraid I'm going to be sick."

They walked along the dark corridor hand in hand. He put his arm around her to keep steady.

At the bedroom door Miss Drone said " Good-night." " Oh no," said the stranger, " you must come in and sleep with me. You see I've never been drunk before. It makes one very nervous. I can't possibly be left alone."

They went into the room.

" What is your name ? " said Miss Drone, by way of making conversation.

" Mary Miles."

" Mary ? " said Miss Drone, slightly startled.

" I wonder," said Mary, " if you'd help me off with these trousers ? I wish I hadn't dressed up in John's clothes. I've spilled gin all down them. He will be cross. Still he can't expect a girl to know how to manage trousers." Mary's remarks were getting very sleepy. " Don't you think it's rather silly to dress up in men's clothes ? "

" It is wicked." Miss Drone's voice was very lachrymose.

GEOFFREY WEST.

THE MARVEL.

MYSELF, I saw young David Isaac Evans, the Martegg Marvel, but twice altogether, yet I recall each occasion vividly and he remains stamped upon my memory as a definite personality.

The first time was in a Cardiff cinema—a large bare hall, like an immense barn, with high roof-lights turned up to reveal the curtained screen and narrow stage beneath, the latter furnished with a purely ornamental chair and a table upon which lay several compact objects not, at my distance, immediately recognisable. The orchestra suddenly hushed its clamour, there was a moment's silence ; then a long shrill note sounded from behind a curtain, the violins took it up, and to a soft accompaniment a slight figure walked lightly on to the stage, a concertina between his hands, and his whole body swaying exaggeratedly to the persuasive rhythms of " Felix kept on walking." At the centre he paused, turned to the audience, increased the volume of sound, then unexpectedly cut it short and stood bowing. A prolonged applause greeted him, and as it continued I surveyed him with a casual curiosity. He seemed a strangely tiny figure against the high curtains, and yet I felt, almost at once, an instinctive repulsion. His blonde wig covered his head, but it remained obviously a wig for all that, and a poor one ; I guessed at black hair beneath, for he was one of that dark, small-eyed ferrety type so common in the southern Welsh hills that one imagines there must be, hidden in those mountains, some prolific breeding-place, some witch's cauldron whence they come bubbling up into scarcely human being. His face was a mask of doll-like pink and white, with eyes set in what seemed large staring sockets, so deeply blue were the lids tinted. He was dressed as a boy of fourteen, in schoolboy clothes, a costume which his thin build entirely suited, but he suggested nothing youthful to me ; I found the long face, the grinning mouth, simply repulsive.

As the clapping died down he bowed again, raised his hands, nodded to the conductor, and broke out into an emphatic version, with variations, of " Comin' Thro' the Rye." At its end he turned to the table behind him and took up one of the objects which lay there—another concertina of, perhaps, half the size of the one discarded. That was the essence of his performance ; he had altogether six or seven instruments of various proportions, from one which rested easily within the palm of the hand to a monstrosity which he could scarcely wield. He used them with effective contrast, playing upon one the latest jazz tunes, upon another sentimental favourites ; a silver-plated one was reserved for hymn-tunes and " Home, Sweet Home," while with the largest he gave what was almost an organ rendering of " The Lost Chord." It was all vastly appreciated by his audience, and he had to appear again and again to acknowledge the applause ; the Welsh are notoriously a musical people.

The second encounter took place a year or so later, at his parents' home in Martegg itself ; the impression left by that closer meeting was hardly more favourable. His environment then, certainly, lent him little attraction, for the family consisted of colliery folk, miners, and its members had necessarily to live near their work. The small house was one of a row of dilapidated cottages clutching precariously the steep slope of the blackened mountainside ; from the muddy track which ran down across the railway to the pit-head beyond the visitor went directly into the confined and gloomy living-room which took up the greater part of the ground-floor. It was winter, and evening ; the lamp on the table was lighted, and chairs had been drawn up within the circle of its illumination for John Evans and myself. Mrs. Evans sat sewing somewhere in the background, and I did not at first notice the huddled figure in the shadow, leaning toward the glowing rather than brilliant fire in the hearth. He made no movement ; it was not until his father called him by name that he turned his head and looked sulkily toward us. I did not recognise him, though I might have done so had it occurred to me, for he was exactly what I had anticipated—black-haired, with tiny eyes, pointed nose and little chin.

" Come, Dai," said his father, but after that instant's regard, still without a word, he turned back to the fire. John Evans grunted. " I don't know what to make of the boy since his accident," he told me. " You can't think, the way he takes on !

See these photies, now—you'd not know him for the same." It was upon looking at them that I first realised the identity of young Dai Evans and the Martegg Marvel.

Later that evening, on the way to the station, his father told me something of his history ; the other details I have gathered from a variety of sources.

Even as a young boy, apparently, David Evans had displayed " musical taste "—he liked to get with a crowd of friends and sing and sing until the neighbours protested. He was, long before he left school at the age of fourteen to go into the mine, an applauded concertinist, the pride of his companions. At first, and to a great extent always, he played by ear ; he was extraordinarily quick at picking up the popular tunes. He was invited to play at the local Band of Hope meetings, and presently his proud father took him to a " musical evening " at the local political club, where the suggestion was made publicly, and as publicly approved, that he was, " reely, good enough for the 'alls." But it was still five years before he achieved his first professional appearance, five years of disappointment and hard work. It was labour, he felt sometimes, without reward, yet there were compensations ; he became, in Martegg at least, a personality, set apart from his fellows as one who was, potentially if not actually, an artiste. There was nothing he loved better than to gather a circle of friends, and when he had eked out his repertoire with all the stage-tricks he had learnt—the smirking, the bowing, the swaying from side to side—to hear them say that " there wasn't none to touch 'im," or that " Dai's a fair marvel." " A fair marvel ! "—that expressed his own opinion of himself so exactly that when at last he blossomed into larger fame it was as " The Martegg Marvel " that he chose to be known.

He began, with his first engagement, a new life. His work in the mine became no more to him than eating or sleeping, and he seemed to live only when he was made-up and waiting for his cue, when the moment came and for a brief quarter of an hour he gave of his best, the focus of hundreds of pairs of eyes, when he heard the great roar of beating hands, when he was Dai Evans no longer, but the Martegg Marvel. Usually it was in village cinemas that he appeared, but he was not unknown in the larger towns, and he had no prouder moment than when, paying a return visit to Cardiff, his audience seemed

to recognise him even as he walked on. Famous indeed he was, a marvel, a marvel!

But one day in the mine his left hand was pinned beneath a sudden "fall"—when it was released three fingers had to be amputated, and the rest was little more than dead flesh. His musical career, clearly, was over, but that was a fact that he refused to accept, and when at last it was forced upon him he sank into a kind of stupor from which he could be roused only to anger. Even when he was found easier employment at the pit-head he went about it so sulkily that his family expected every day to hear of his discharge.

Time, it is said, will reconcile us to most things; though Dai stood out and refused to be comforted his fretting came presently to be accepted as a part of his natural being. The past, of course, was not utterly buried; a certain glory still attached itself to him, and his criticism, the authoritative criticism of an ex-professional, was widely sought. It was thus that, one fatal evening not long after my visit, Joshua Lewis brought his son Owen to the seat of judgment. A group was formed about the fire, and the grinning nervous boy uncased his concertina and began to play. From the corner nearest the door Dai watched him with sullen eyes. There was a murmur of approval at the end of the first tune, but the critic was silent; at the end of the second John Evans cried, "Bravo, boy!" and told his wife to reach down Dai's silver instrument for Owen to play "Home, Sweet Home"—the universal test-piece. In the corner the tiny eyes brightened, then went dark again . . . his own instrument! When the last note had died away John Evans again spoke first: "Good lad! Josh, the lad's a marvel. That's what he is—a marvel!"

There was a sudden movement as Dai rose to his feet; he was visibly trembling, but without a word he walked to the door, opened it quickly, and went out. As it closed an approaching train whistled shrilly. They heard him give a kind of inarticulate cry, and then his feet running on the path. The circle scattered in surprise, and John Evans went to the door. He shouted, then he too began to run. But Dai, crossing the railway line, had been knocked down even as his father called; he was killed immediately. It was said at the inquest that he had put himself in front of the train deliberately, but this the father would not let himself believe.

It was a grand funeral ; everyone in the village seemed to be there, splendid in black and carrying expensive wreaths—an affair that would have done the dead boy's heart good to see. What with one thing and another it was well into the second year before the family was able to pay the last bill. Upon the gravestone was carved Dai's name and his title, " The Martegg Marvel." To this latter young Owen Lewis, coveting it for himself, wished to object, but under the circumstances was persuaded not to.

DESIGN FOR A BOOKPLATE.
By Bissill.

ANALYSIS.

The Reception.

STANDING up here shaking hands, remembering presents and pecking faces ;—elderly wrinkled faces pecked through veils.

Not thinking ; too excited ; like champagne, one's first. Helpless feeling ; not so exciting now as earlier in the day ; rather a sort of disappointedness with myself. Should have felt it more. Think of the cost of all this. Ought to feel more for it.

Such an ordinary thing, too—a wedding. . . . . hectic in case one should have time to realise what we are doing—what we are doing . . . . thought of a sentence for that not long ago ; or rather Terry thought of it . . . . " legalised lust "—the sort of thing Terry would say.

(" Thank you, Mrs. Stoles, so much for the charming cushion . . . . just the sort of thing—just what we want for the flat . . . .")

Tom doesn't know who this old thing is ; must explain ; oh damn, where's Tom.

(" Tom, this is Mrs. Stoles, one of my oldest and dearest friends.")

That's a lie. Still . . . . rotten, absurd ; still, the cushion'll be useful. Do I really love Tom ? What *is* " Love," anyhow ? Shall I like his nakedness next mine, whenever and always. Why does my mind wander ; it shouldn't—at my wedding. Still—one must think of something even at a wedding. Tom, Naked.

(" No, Mother, not more cake. Oh ! yes, cake for Betty. Eat my health, Babs.")

Do I look nice ? Just standing up here and being facetious, that's what I'm doing. Who thinks of Tom and the to-night together. Mother does, Mother would. That secret anticipatory

look . . . . very embarrassing. She never thought of that before. She never thought of me and Terry like that, thank the Lord she never knew. Oh! shut up; forget it, you're marrying Tom, forget it.

(" Tom—we shall have to go and change soon "—" Right, old thing, any time . . . .")

Supposing it had been Terry, not Tom. It really had to be Tom. Safer, supposing it had been Terry . . . Terry beside me now . . . no, Mother never knew,—it was never marked up—I can hear her horrified whisper, " His Mistress."

(" Rather, Sheila, loved it and shall take it with me—that dear little travelling bag, Tom.")

I hope I look imposing—the day of one's life. Funny, it's great fun,—but I do wish I might go quietly back to my old self—after . . .

(" No more, thanks, I've had quite enough. You wouldn't like me to be singing comic songs all the way to Torquay, would you . . . .")

Fool, facetious fool. I wonder what Tom is thinking. Do I look nice? . . .

God—my God! why has Terry come . . . the idiot—no, the beast. With Elspeth . . . Terry—sh-sh I mustn't seem to see them yet. I'll go on talking to Tom. Solid Tom—no, I mustn't see them yet—no, not yet; wait till they get up to me; Elspeth will kiss me . . . . she doesn't know about Terry and me . . . Oh God, please do something . . . I don't really apologise for being Terry's mistress. I don't love Tom. God! how dramatic—and that film-man's gone. Stop being facetious; stop it. Face it out. They're coming now. Terry and Elspeth. Engaged *Terry*.

(" Well, Tom, old boy, congrats.! Good bargain, what?")

Terry, how can you? No, steady! Please God, help me. Don't let me blush, or anything; please, dear God.

(" Hello, Terry . . . thanks so much. Noble of you to turn out to a wedding. Well—you'll have to go to your own soon. Rather; Elspeth—good luck—yes, rather.")

Terry: don't move away, stay near. Tom and Terry; together now. Terry's hair's wavy and Tom's straight. Why, you can *see* the difference.

Do I look imposing? The day of one's life. Dear, dear,

dear, *dear* old Tom. I wish everything would stop still for me while I stop to think ; so that I could get straight . . .

(" Yes, let's go and change now—just half an hour . . . .")

* * *

Changing.

I mustn't think now ; I seem to have been almost happy till Terry came . . .

I wonder where Tom's changing ? I can't change with him ? Funny that. After to-night I must.

Quiet at last ; anyhow, except for Mary. Dear festive Mary, she's been weeping quite a lot. I like servants, awfully.

(" Yes, Mary ; did I look nice ?—I'm so glad. Yes, beige stockings . . . where are my shoes ? ")

I must make the most of this ; never again exactly the same limelight . . . when I have a baby, perhaps, but that can't be so romantic. The journey'll be fun ; new clothes, husband and " first class everywhere " feeling. But I must be very distant with Tom . . . shy innocence ?—no, " poise " of the modern girl . . .

(" How's Fred, Mary ; why—you'll soon be doing all this, too ! ")

Facetious fool again.

Very dignified in the train, especially. Tom will have that " wanting to kiss " look. *I* know. But we must begin as I mean to go on. Shan't let him think that paying for my bed and board he can share the former and the latter. Epigram that. Wouldn't Terry see the point. Damn Terry. I cut my wisdom teeth on him. Damn Terry.

Start as we mean to go on. Give and take in married life. The parson said that in his sermon . . . common . . . *very*.

(" Yes, Mary ; my gloves and the little pochette . . . .")

Does she think I'm excited about to-night ? Then she's hopelessly wrong. I'm not.

Anyhow, I don't see much more than new clothes and new housekeeping in getting married as far as I'm concerned. All this romance about sex. A dull affair really ; a little alcoholic in its early stages ; " alcoholic " is a bad term—but it is difficult to express what I mean.

But why all this fuss, anyway ?

(" Thanks, Mary, you're a dear, everything so beautifully

ready. Goodbye, Mary—goodbye; good luck, thank you for all you've done . . . .")

* * *

The Going.

(" Yes, Paddington, of course . . . .")

Day of one's life—good God! And Mother all weepy now—why? It makes me feel so embarrassed, and that's futile enough . . . " My darling going to be mauled by a great strong man "—attitude. That hers. Enjoying the thought. I wish it were so. Tom is more than likely futile and gentle. " Don't-want-to-hurt-you-darling " type. Whereas—I suppose I'd like to be raped. What am I thinking of—now?

(" Rather! Thanks; yes, goodbye Daddy. Yes we will! Goodbye, darling, yes . . . .")

Oh—go on! get away!—start, you fool, START . . . Tom, yes, Tom. Dear starchy Tom. Stolid, well meaning Tom, *my husband?* My God . . . I've done it this time.

* * *

In the Train.

Thank heaven we are ordinary people once again with all these other people about. Pullman—papers, books—to pass the time—the first time alone with one's husband!!

New clothes—they make up for a great deal. Nice travelly smell, trains have. Nice smelly carriages. Fun.

Terry would love—NO! not him again. I will try not to. God—don't get Your own back this way.

What's the matter with Tom? Looks morose. Thinking of to-night . . . How revolting to fuss yet. There's plenty of time, a whole eight hours till midnight. Tom's so old-fashioned. All the fun's over and now we must get to business. " Give and take " nonsense!—no sense at all.

(" Tom, do stop, being so nervy and sit down and read the paper ordinarily.")

(" How could I read the paper ordinarily with you, darling? ")

(" You mean—with the first night business hanging over us.")

(" Darling——! ")

(" Well—why is it so awful to say that; we've talked frankly enough before . . . .")

(" Yes, but now we're married . . . darling.")

Fool! Fool . . .

(" You mean there's no need to be frank in words when one can in deeds . . . .")

(" Darling—don't be blatant.")

He's nonplussed ; doesn't know how to take me. Might as well have said anything on earth else.

(" Darling, *don't* be blatant . . . .")

Ridiculous ! How soon shall I repent of this " legalised " liaison !

One is freer ? yes. One's friends cease to speculate, but they begin to gossip. Epigram. If I told Tom he'd not understand. There are thousands of things he'll never reach—like that . . . things I shall have to be alone with . . . things Terry *still* understands . . .

But, then it didn't matter. It does now. We shall quarrel ; separate. Why can't I be in love ? And excited now. Be anything at all except continually " seeing through " everything instead of being decently half-witted.

(" Happy—Darling ? ")

Now, then, dutiful wife . . .

(" Yes, Tom dear, of course . . . .")

Liar. Lie the first. I thought this might be the end of the search, and instead it's the beginning. I was excited before the Church, and now I'm not excited any longer . . . As a matter of fact, there's nothing to be excited about. Except my clothes. They're nice.

I wish I were running away from somebody, wish that there were really some veil of romance somewhere.

There is nothing unknown—anywhere. I wish there were Sheiks and Rudolph Valentinos about. Even then I'd have gone and married a podge like Tom—not even a frightfully large income either.

How can I think of incomes and podges on my wedding day. I should be feeling a sort of Virgin Mary happiness. Oh ! damn our sophistication.

* * *

Dinner.

Dinner ; soup, prosaic again—I've eaten soup with Tom before—with lots of people, but never as stupidly as this. This shadow of legality to-night.

There were times when there was all sorts of excitement in

eating soup; with Terry in his flat. Terry so challenging—somehow. He laughed at me for a "prude"—a prude—me! But Tom is slow—slow—slow.

Why do I keep on thinking of Terry; dead times—past.

("Tired, darling?")

("No, thanks, old thing.")

"Old thing." I never meant the man I'd marry to be an "old thing." To be able to call him "old thing"—Terry was never either Old or a Thing, and Tom is both.

("Good soup—what?")

There is no answer to that; but murder was surely done for less . . .

* * *

The Hotel.

My good God—why do these people all stare? Curse them—why do they stare. Shrivelled cynical tip-seekers.

Pretty hotel—ideal for romance. Evening lights—fire in bedroom, musical comedy setting.

I could stay here for a week discreetly chaperoned and—with these my delightful clothes—"get off" with more of a catch than Tom. Funny, very; how one's mind leads the way for one's soul . . .

Nice room this. Lovely view of a lonely twilight sea . . .

I wonder if Tom thinks of other people and other times . . . I shouldn't be wondering what Tom thinks, I should be *knowing* as I would with Terry.

Put my things away; nice new things away, carefully . . . Put Tom's away, too. Silly that.

Tom! what are you doing?—creeping up and gripping me in your arms like that—Tom, stop it—get away—getting into my thoughts—ugh—ah!

("Tom, dear! Cave-mannish—what!")

Silly of me to say that; silly, facetious . . . Later facetiousness.

* * *

And Later.

Mustn't feel hunted. That's silly. Began and must go through with it.

Tom downstairs—talking to the American Bar man. Tom

looking burly and embarrassed. He would spare my virgin susceptibilities by coming up to undress discreetly and later.

Listen to the sea—ssssh . . . sssh . . . sssh . . . and the fire, crackling; like when I was quite a little kiddie . . . we stayed at Bournemouth, by the shore. No, Boscombe it was. I was put to bed so much earlier than Mother went . . . I used to lie and listen to the sea . . . sssh . . . sssh . . . sssh . . .—just like this sea. All sleepy and happy . . . with the firelight dancing shadows round the furniture . . one blind up . . . I'll arrange this room (lock the door, quick !) just like that . . . be a kid again. Shut my eyes; go to sleep, half-sleep and wait for Mother to come and say " Goodnight " . . . they'll come up to bed later . . . those are Daddy's clothes there, not Tom's . . . Tom—who is Tom ? I'm a little girl again. All sleepy . . . so sleepy . . . almost a-s-l-e-e-p.

Terry ? No, not Terry; Mother creeping in to see if I'm asleep . . . she doesn't know of Terry . . . a good thing . . . how happy I used to be . . .

* * *

Wake up ! Steps in the passage . . . quick lights . . . I'm old again now; grown up—very very old.

Knocking; right : come in—oh ! unlock the door . . . quick . . . try not to look embarrassed. All dishevelled, really. Damn. Not how it should be. How to explain ?

What's the matter with Tom ? why doesn't he speak ? He just comes in and stands, looking.

(" Crying—darling ? ")

I haven't been. At least, I didn't know I had.

Why does he not look at me; just go to the window and look out . . . just do nothing.

(" Tom—Tom—— ")

(" Darling ? ")

Why doesn't he turn round. What's the matter ? Why doesn't he speak—just leaning out of the window like that . . . Why are things so different somehow from what I planned ?

(" Tom . . . ? Tom . . . ? ")

Why doesn't he answer . . . how stiff his arm is—as if to shake my hand off . . . I can't see his face; it's buried in his hands . . .

(" Tom—I say—what's the matter ? ")

He's crying ! like I saw Daddy cry once long ago when his

Mother died . . . all shattered and babyish and humble. And I'd not thought that he felt anything and then I felt him a little child . . .

(" Tom, what is it. Tell me, please. Tom dear. Dear, dear Tom ; don't cry.")

How simple and silly. I'd not thought like that, somehow, that he would feel anything in his soul—why does one think so little—God !

God, are you paying me out now ?

(" Tom—please listen ; are you very unhappy ? ")

(" Frightfully, darling.")

I didn't mean to hurt. I didn't mean to hurt so much. God—listen to me. I can't bear him to be unhappy. He's too big to be unhappy. Listen, God. I'm sorry. Damn you and everything.

" Why so frightfully—dear ? "

" It's all so different—I'd meant you to be so happy . . . ."

WISDOM OF THE QUARTER.

S a method of passing dull times away, the Cross-Word cannot easily be rivalled. It s now been popular for two or three years, and re are no signs that it is diminishing in favour. the contrary, its popularity is extending and reasing. Railway journeys which formerly were l of boring intervals are now relieved of their lium by it.

ST. JOHN ERVINE, in *The Spectator*.

* * *

ISSING wrote nothing of first-class importance. His gloomy view of life and society was ıply not true. The public recognised that and ned away, and they were right.

HORACE THOROGOOD, in *The Star*.

* * *

HE majority of girls who spend their working hours in offices have very dull lives. *They nt to get a little romance into their lives*, and there no quicker or surer way of doing that than by ding a thrilling work by Ethel M. Dell, Olive ıdsley, E. M. Hull, or anyone else who takes ir fancy.

Some will say that this is bad for them, and ıt it would be better if they cultivated a more ellectual taste in their choice of books! Rubbish! good exciting novel that takes their thoughts ay to glorious lands and glorious men is equal the best tonic obtainable, as you will see if you e how bright their eyes are, and how cheerful y look when they pop out at their stations.

always envy writers like Olive Wadsley, who ve the power to give so much joy to girls whose es are filled chiefly with work and the worry making ends meet.

n between the reading of these romances—d when one book is just finished there has to be gap before another can be begun in the right rit of expectation—I strongly recommend ckens.

MARGARET BANNERMAN, in *The Star*.

* * *

PRAYER.

AROUND the Throne the Saints rejoice
With harp, and psaltery, and voice:
O God, I have no gift of praise,
So give me work for all my days.

A. T. S., in *The Observer*.

WHAT *is* haggis? Some foreigners are under the impression that it is bred on farms, but its secret was disclosed yesterday by a chef, who placed it, as it were, amongst the highest epicurean delights.

"It is one of the tastiest, most appetising, and satisfying of dishes," he said. "Anyone can make a haggis, with care. This is a recipe of haggis—a real Scottish haggis:—

"You require a mutton paunch; wash it and clean it and turn it inside-out. Take the heart, lungs, and liver of a sheep and boil them together for half an hour. Take away the meat and chop it very fine, except part of the liver, which, after allowing to cool, must be grated. The chopped mixture is then spread on a table and seasoned with salt, pepper, nutmeg, cayenne pepper, and chopped onions.

"Add the grated liver, a handful of oatmeal, and 1 lb. of chopped beef suet. Fill up the paunch with the mixture, but be sure to allow enough room for expansion whilst cooking. Add a glass of good stock to it, prick the paunch all over with a needle, and sew up the opening. The haggis—for it is now a haggis—should be boiled for three hours."

Sunday Times.

* * *

THE "Mercury" is nothing if not catholic, and its services to the cause of poetry are among the most eminent. Mr. Squire makes the interesting confession that he has occasionally published verse, not entirely on its merits, but in the hope that better may come.

The Observer.

* * *

NEW WAY WITH TRIPE.

TRIPE! It is cheap, it is nourishing, but it is often dull. The other day, however, I persuaded Gustav, of the famous Le Gourmets Restaurant, to tell me how they make their famous tripe dish. Long simmering is the secret. He puts tripe in a casserole with a calf's foot for fat and gluten, and slices of onions and carrots, and simmers it in a little water for three or four hours. Then he adds about a pint of cider—and you can buy a quart bottle, you know, for 10d.—and simmers it for more hours—in fact, if you are going to have it for supper you should begin it at breakfast time.

One of the advantages of this dish is that the more it is reheated the better it is, so you can use up your dinner or supper dish for lunch. At Le Gourmets they bring it to the table in a little brown casserole over a *rechaud* with burning charcoal in it.

JANET MURRAY, in *The Westminster Gazette*.

PARIS always gives one a delightful feeling. The dressmakers—I love clothes, but how I hate trying on. And how I dislike being tempted beyond my means. I do not want to waste all my money on clothes. I always feel ashamed to spend much on them.

What flowers every one sent me! I love flowers. And the friends, and the petitions, and all the people who thought that they must see me. . . .

But beneath it all there is an ache in my heart—a wound ever bleeding. Somewhere, here, my big naughty boy is living. Will I see him? That thought is ever uppermost in my mind.

QUEEN OF RUMANIA, in
The Sunday Express.

* * *

DEAR Mr. Austin Reed,—Publication of a new book invariably brings me two kinds of correspondence—the footling and the thoughtful. I answer your letter about my "Unsentimental Journey" because it belongs so indubitably to class two.

You say that we in England *can* be just as enterprising and even more efficient than the Americans. Quite so! But my point is that, nowadays, we *aren't*. We're too lazy, too self-satisfied, too content with our old easy grooves.

Still, I'll admit that my wanderings throughout the States showed me no "gentleman's store" (Anglicé—man's shop) half as well equipped, half as well staffed or half as well stocked as your new place in (American—"on") Regent Street.

And even making allowance for the fact that the wants and necessities of the mere male are apt to take a very subsidiary place in "Woman's Own Country," I don't fancy it will be long before New York, or Chicago, or Los Angeles, tries to copy the "manly example" you have set.

Meanwhile, congratulations on a British retail trade-victory. We need more such. And badly. And all the time!

Sincerely yours,
GILBERT FRANKAU (Advertisement).

* * *

THE DAILY SLAPPING.

NOTHING is better for the skin than a daily slapping. Having cleansed your face thoroughly, dip a piece of cotton wool in your tonic water and slap the face and neck with this briskly till you feel all in a glow. This circulates the blood and makes your skin clear and healthy looking. You can use your fingers if you prefer, but dip them in the tonic first.

Always be careful to slap lightly yet firmly, and with an upward movement. If you haven't tried this simple method of improving your complexion you will be surprised at the result of a few days' slapping.

MISS HEATHER THATCHER, in *The Star.*

RUSSIAN BOOTS AT THE HOUSE.

MISS ELLEN WILKINSON has created another sartorial sensation at St. Stephe Her last was a quasi-Eton outfit, now it is Russ boots.

To-day she was evidently pushed for time, came dashing into Palace Yard in her Baby Aus Stepping quickly out of her car, she trotted the cobblestones of Palace Yard, revealing a da pair of brown Russian boots of the "fittin variety, with the new patent fastener gadget front.

She looked the picture of neatness with close-fitting hat and businesslike top-coat, somehow, I think "Ellen" meant business, she wore that determined-cum-inquisitive expres —the one which earned for her recently the briquet of "Miss Perky." *The S*

* * *

GUNMETAL.

MANY people will be relieved to hear that vogue for flesh-coloured stockings is at on the wane.

Their popularity is seriously threatened by of a shade known as 'gunmetal."

Daily Exp

* * *

DIFFICULT.

THE *joie de vivre* of the Hon. Maurice Ba the brilliant author, is wonderful to beh He dances, plays the piano, sings songs, g and gay, in any language, and has no rival in difficult art of balancing a glass full of wine on top of his bald head.

THE DRAGOMAN, in the *Daily Exp*

* * *

WINE DOWN THE SINK.

"WHY I signed the pledge" was the sub of a vigorous address by Mr. Angus Wat of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who is directly associ with the famous "Skipper" firm, at a lunc the National Commercial Temperance Leagu London yesterday.

He said that his father, a fire clay manufact reinstated a foreman with the remark, "You to your pledge and you'll keep your job." father, a moderate drinker, signed it too a example to his foreman.

Mr. Watson was then a boy of eight and he remembered the evening his father came home told the family about it and how he and his s solemnly poured the contents of the few bo of wine in the house down the sink.

Daily M

* * *

BLUE AGAIN.

ALTHOUGH at both the big balls of last n at the Ritz and Claridge's, there was a ponderance of pink and of gold, separate or blen I think blue may be coming to the fore again.

I noticed that at the latter place Lady Carisbrooke ore blue, with what a woman told me were wonder- l sequins of gold and purple and nacre. At the rmer Mrs. Wilfred Ashley, who left at the same ne as Mrs. Philip Snowden, and seemed to have uch to say to her, was in turquoise blue with a ver hem composed of lines of silver sequins.

Lady Patricia Ramsay, clad in gold lace, was so at the Ritz, and Lady Beatrice Ormsby Gore, ho was with her most of the time, also wore blue

The Star.

* * *

HE KING'S TASTE.

I LEARNED quite a lot about the tastes of the Royal Family from Mr. John Lusty, who knows ore about turtles, turtle soup, birds' nests, ngaroos' tails, and other oddities of the culinary orld than anyone else. He tells me that the ing is particularly fond of turtle soup and equently has a cup of it for "elevens" in the orning.

Doctors agree in the sustaining properties of e turtle, and nasty as the calipash and the lipee (the back and the stomach) looked hanging at Mr. Lusty's stall, he assured me that one uld easily make an entire dinner off turtle.

"You can begin with the soup, then for an ntrée have the turtle fins, then a cutlet of turtle, en a turtle steak grilled with plenty of butter, d then the concentrated essence of turtle spread hot dry toast for a savoury and sprinkled with armesan cheese. *The Westminster Gazette.*

* * *

AST WORDS FROM RIP. FOREIGN OFFICE DOG BIDS FAREWELL TO SIR AUSTEN.

WHEN Sir William Tyrrell, Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, arrived at ictoria to-day to take leave of Sir Austen Chamber- in, who was leaving for Paris and Geneva, the ation official at the barrier declined to let his og Rip go past.

Sir William protested that the dog had been the platform many times previously, but Rip ttled all doubts by slipping between the attendant's gs. No further protests were raised.

The Star.

* * *

ORTRAITS IN PICCADILLY.

THE November sunshine and the more cheerful coal news brought a great crowd of well- nown people to the Portrait Painters' Private iew at Burlington House to-day. Everybody emed in radiant spirits and found something n the Academy wall to stimulate the sense of eauty.

The portrait of the year is John Collier's "Prince f Wales," presented to the Delhi Chamber of rinces by the Maharajah of Jind. It is an appealing icture, rather on the solemn side.

"To think," I heard one young lady murmur as she studied it, "he is not even engaged." Among the notabilities admiring the works of Orpen, Lavery, and their colleagues were Lord and Lady Portman, Sir George and Lady Lewis, Lady Rawlinson, Sir Frederick Pollock, Sir Frederick Macmillan, Lady Chadwick Healey, Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, Lord Armstrong, Sir Arthur and Lady Dick, Lord Jessel, Lord Bessborough and Mark Hambourg. *The Star.*

* * *

HISTORICAL HAT BOXES.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD got his Frognal home from Col. Webber, and was fortunate in paying an almost absurdly reasonable figure for it. It is spacious, and not the least pretentious. The family finds it most comfortable, and he has at last secured ample accommodation for his books.

In the dining-room are a couple of red leather hat-boxes. Mr. MacDonald found them in some out-of-the-way antique shop. They were originally cartridge cases with straps for a gamekeeper's hand, and printed on the side are the Royal arms not excepting the "Honi soit." They guard the fireplace, are used for coal or wood, or odds and ends, and are curiously picturesque.

The Star.

* * *

UNUSUAL.

WITH him were Mrs. Churchill and Lady Birkenhead, who wore a tiara. Lord D'Abernon joined the party later.

Mr. Churchill's evening collar is fascinating. It is deep in front and narrows almost to vanishing point at the back. *Daily Express.*

* * *

SPOILING A GOOD THING.

ONE thing I must speak against: the long nights of hectic dancing, interspersed with cigarettes and cocktails. That is not pleasure, that is dissipation, so very very different, and so sad when thought of at the same time as the happy, girlish joys that make women sweet, charming and gay.

YOUR PLEASURE MUST PLEASE.

MUSIC, sewing—sewing parties with your friends —such quiet things as these, are all pleasures to some people. Isn't there a song which goes, "A little of what you fancy——" After all the thing is change—change—after your day, change your clothes, your shoes—it helps enormously—and if you are going out, and cannot go home between, go into your restaurant and take off your hat. Never mind what people say—it's your head, and you have a right to rest it.

Yes, take your pleasures while you may, we are only young once; but be moderate always, or your work will suffer—I am going to talk about work another day.

MARGARET BANNERMAN, in *The Star.*

"THE Silver Spoon," by John Galsworthy (Heinemann), 7s. 6d. net.

Comprehensive and dispassionate in sympathy, the most evenly intelligent of contemporary novelists, Mr. Galsworthy continues his work as faithful surveyor and interpreter of modern life. Nothing is mishandled: not a character but is convincingly realised: so sensitively just does the satirist's knowledge make him that at times we wonder if he *is* a satirist. We find his excellence faintly depressing; but we have no adverse criticism worth making of his book—except that we never feel it is more than a book. He is in some ways the Thackeray of modern society; and that, far more complex and "perfect" as he is, he is no Thackeray, might be a literary epitome of two ages, their weakness and their strength.

The Adelphi.

* * *

CENSORSHIP IN BEING.

THIRTEEN plays have recently been visited by members of the bishops' stage plays committee. The following are the reports in brief:—

"*The Love Game.*"—"Remarks about birth control may be deemed offensive."

"*Sleeping Partners.*"—"Brilliant acting, but numerous incidents of lewd implications."

"*And So to Bed.*"—"Much barefaced immorality and many shocking passages, but unity of art and truth prevent breach of good manners. Not to be recommended."

"*Made in Heaven.*"—"Considerable outspokenness and a clear indication of an adulterous act, redeemed somewhat by two healthy characters. A play that helps to blunt the moral sense."

"*The Queen was in the Parlour.*"—"Last scene objectionable, but not offensive enough to justify protest."

"*The Showing-up of Blanco Posnet.*"—"The imputation of responsibility for evil to the Deity, even under stress of false accusations, cannot surely be defended in this country by those to whom religion is a living reality."

"*Ask Beccles.*"—"A play dealing with crooks, but not predominantly so in a sense deemed harmful."

No action was taken in the case of these plays.

The Sunday Express.

* * *

I CAN make shift to do my work in all sorts of odd uncomfortable places and at hours when I would rather be asleep. It is always a comfort to think how much better I should write if I had more time to do it in. STORM JAMESON, in *The Star.*

* * *

TASTE OR COMFORT.

IT is no secret that the Prince of Wales dresses with more taste than the Duke of York. The Duke shocks his tailor by ordering as many as six suits of identical pattern at a time, thus sacrifici to convenience the chances of a change in mascul fashion. *Daily Expre*

* * *

WHAT DOES NAPOLEON MEAN?

I DREAM about Napoleon quite a lot—I f I know him quite well—isn't that a que thing? One day when I have time I shall have see if the psycho-analysts can tell me why I drea about Napoleon: I expect they would say I h a suppressed complex for not paying my laund bill. But it wouldn't be true!

MADGE TITHERADGE, in *The St*

* * *

MR. W. J. LOCKE, the novelist, and his Americ wife have hit on a practical way of celebrati Armistice Day in their villa at Cannes.

They have invited their friends to cockt parties, and twenty francs or more will be charg for every drink, the proceeds to go to Lord Hai Fund. *Daily Expre*

* * *

THE controversy among old and present Har vians on the kind of football to be play during school terms reached an acute stage yesterd and a published appeal has been made to O Harrovians to write on postcards their views the question whether Rugby football should substituted for Harrow football after next Founde Day. *The Sunday Tim*

* * *

LORD and Lady Swaythling, who are giving small dance for their daughter, Miss Joy Montagu, on Thursday, are delighted at her decisi at the early age of seventeen, to equip herself earn her own living, should she ever wish to do Miss Montagu, who is a clever and serious-mind girl, goes every morning to a school where s learns shorthand, typewriting, and all the deta of up-to-date business methods. At present s intends to utilise her training for work in co nection with the secretarial side of film productio in which her youngest brother is interested.

* * *

ANOTHER baby chimpanzee has arrived at t Zoo. This new ape is a small, fragile creatu who cannot be more than six or eight months o although his bald head and wrinkled, carewo face make him look as if he has lived to an incredil great age and known every kind of grief. He w very depressed when he came to the menage for he is suffering from a bad cold and the effe of a lonely journey, but camphorated oil, wa blankets, a little brandy, and a great deal of petti have cheered him up, and he is getting so spo that he cried bitterly when left alone.

"Men and Intimacies," by AUTOLYCUS, in T *Sunday Times.*

'E only one fault to find with the States. There are too many foreign immigrants! ey're quite right to shut down on it. The number people one has to deal with who can't speak glish, French, or German sufficiently for one be able to make one's wants known!

t used to drive me distracted when I was rking very hard—and wanted my meals to be t up to me. I got so that I even disliked hearing ir broken English.

REBECCA WEST, in *The Evening Standard.*

* * *

DON'T know why, but the back of one's head matters enormously in the Charleston, and should preen and prink one's neck more than 's face to look well, a peek at the back of the k is pretty or the new Beau Brummell brushing oss with the waves at an angle. Pearls and vgaws must be set aside, though bangles and celets, if worn tight, give a neat though native sh to the wrists and arms.

VIOLA TREE, in *The Star.*

* * *

NNING RISKS.

WONDER if poor Godfrey will feel cold," said flappers who waited in the queue outside Adelphi Theatre to see Mr. Tearle, their hero, the scantily dressed part of Nuitani, the South islander.

He wears nothing but short breeches, a necklace sharks' teeth, and a bracelet on his left arm.

Daily Express.

* * *

VELY OLD LACE.

ADY IRENE PRATT has four great-aunts, and she pointed out the lovely old lace veil t they have combined to give her.

Lady Fiona Pratt, Lady Irene's younger sister, o will be the only grown-up bridesmaid, and o has unshingled hair, was very busy acting ateur detective to-day, and she succeeded in ching the bridegroom walking off to another m with some jewellery still in his pockets.

The Westminster Gazette.

* * *

MAKING BOWLERS HAPPY.

C.C. RECOMMENDED TO ADOPT SMALLER BALL.

OFFICIAL STATEMENT.

HE following statement has been issued from Lords:—

"The special sub-committee having interviewed e manufacturers and considered representations m various clubs and associations, recommend to the M.C.C. that the circumference of the ball should be from a minimum of 8 13/16 inches to a maximum of 9 inches, and that the law should be altered to that effect in 1927, but not enforced until 1928."

A smaller ball would, of course, assist the bowlers, particularly with regard to spin, and the majority of well-known players are in favour of its adoption.

The Star.

* * *

MY maid has a friction glove, which she dips in an alcohol lotion; and I am then rubbed all over—hard—she has a strong arm and likes the exercise! So do I, but you would laugh to see me, for when she has finished I am as red as a beetroot all over.

ALICE DELYSIA, in *The Star.*

* * *

I SAID that at all events meat was bad for the teeth. Mr. Hambourg answered that one should eat bran like a horse, and that he ate bran like a horse.

What a good idea! Bran is wood, of course—or am I mixing it up with saw dust? Well, I shall try it. How curious it is that all notions give zest to life. To-morrow I shall wake up thinking it is bran-time. Hurrah!

VIOLA TREE, in *The Weekly Dispatch.*

* * *

W.E.G. (3rd February, 1927).

WERE these things true, spake the defamer sooth,
And that great soul we reverence thus was soiled;
Then in this world were neither faith nor truth—
Our purest shrines were broken and despoiled.

J. SAXON MILLS, in *Westminster Gazette.*

* * *

I ALWAYS carry about with me my two beautiful French dolls which Anita Elson gave me; these hang on either side of my dressing-table, always.

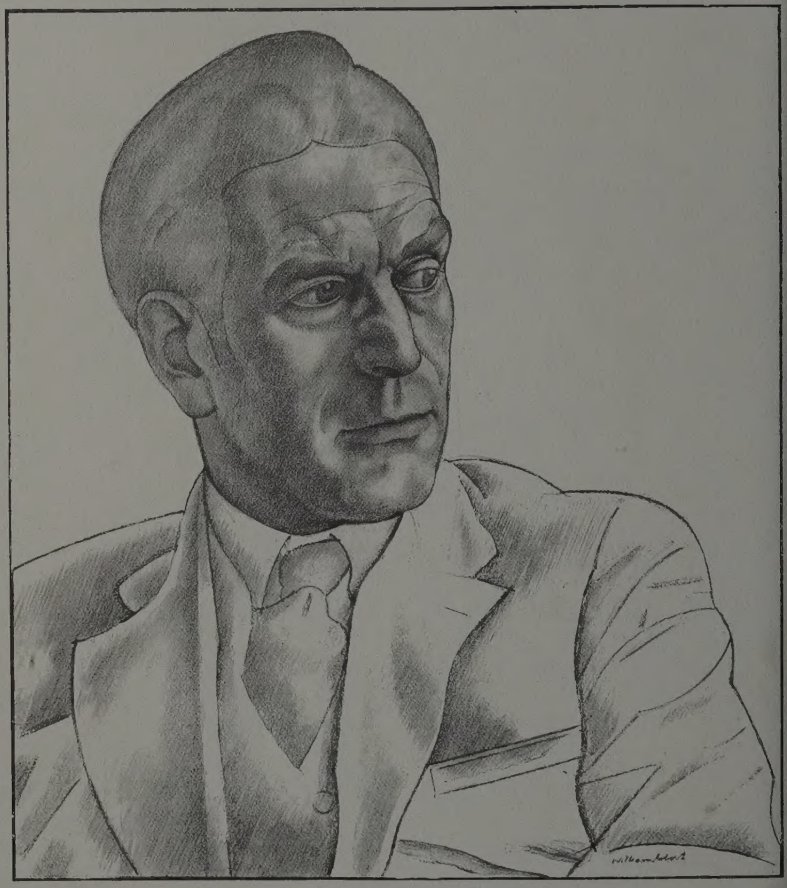
One thing I can never be without is a little case of books. I should feel terribly lonely without some books, for whenever I have a few moments I always read. In my dressing-room now you will find Hugh Walpole, Galsworthy, Oscar Wilde, and Alfred Noyes. Not the plays of either Galsworthy or Oscar Wilde though, for somehow or another I never can get on with reading plays. Perhaps that is the reason I cannot enjoy Bernard Shaw. I have tried, but he is above me or below me or something; anyway, you will never find his books in my dressing-room.

JUNE, in *The Star.*

* * *

I SHOULD place Mr. Masefield as a better poet than Shelley; but I think he would take off his hat most cheerfully to Swinburne.

ROBERT BLATCHFORD, in *The Evening Standard.*



Drawing of A. E. COPPARD
by William Roberts